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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1910

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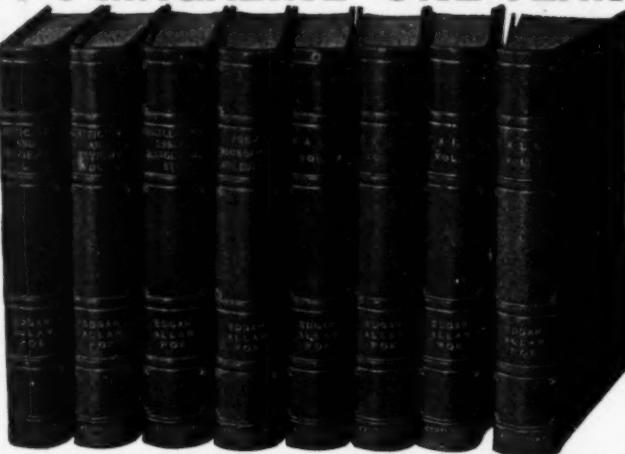
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While waiting our turn to get a chair, we stood talking, and, seeing a pair of shoes standing on a table, evidently there to be cleaned, I said banteringly:

"Now, I suppose, Stone, from looking at those shoes, you can deduce all there is to know about the owner of them."

I remember that Sherlock Holmes wrote once, "From a drop of water, a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other," but when I heard Fleming Stone's reply to my half-laughing challenge, I felt that he had outdone the mythical logician. With a mild twinkle in his eye, but with a perfectly grave face, he said slowly:

"Those shoes belong to a young man, five feet eight inches high. He does not live in New York, but is here to visit his sweetheart. She lives in Brooklyn, is five feet nine inches tall, and is deaf in her left ear. They went to the theatre last night, and neither was in evening dress."

I stared at him incredulously, as I always did when confronted by his astonishing "deductions," and simply said:

"Tell this little Missourian all about it."

"It did sound well, reeled off like that, did n't it?" he observed, chuckling more at my air of eager curiosity than at his own achievement. "But it's absurdly easy, after all. He is a young man because his shoes are in the very latest, extreme, not exclusive style. He is five feet eight, because the size of his foot goes with that height of man, which, by the way, is the height of nine out of ten men, any way. He does n't live in New York or he would n't be stopping at a hotel. Besides, he would be down-town at this hour, attending to business."

"Unless he has freak business hours, as you and I do," I put in.

"Yes, that might be. But I still hold that he does n't live in New York, or he could n't be staying at this Broadway hotel overnight, and sending his shoes down to be shined at half-past nine in the morning. His sweetheart is five feet nine, for that is the height of a tall girl. I know she is tall, for she wears a long skirt. Short girls wear short skirts, which make them look shorter still, and tall girls wear very long skirts, which make them look taller."

"Why do they do that?" I inquired, greatly interested.

"I don't know. You'll have to ask that of some one wiser than I. But I know it's a fact. A girl would n't be considered really tall if less than five feet nine. So I know that's her height. She is his sweetheart, for no man would go from New York to Brooklyn and bring a lady over here to the theatre, and then take her home, and return to New York in the early hours of morning, if he were not in love with her. I know she lives in Brooklyn, for the paper

says there was a heavy shower there last night, while I know no rain fell in New York. I know that they were out in that rain, for her long skirt became muddy, and in turn muddied the whole upper of his left shoe. The fact that only the left shoe is so soiled proves that he walked only at her right side, showing that she must be deaf in her left ear, or he would have walked part of the time on that side. I know that they went to the theatre in New York, because he is still sleeping at this hour, and has sent his boots down to be cleaned, instead of coming down with them on his feet to be shined here. If he had been merely calling on the girl in Brooklyn, he would have been home early, for they do not sit up late in that borough. I know they went to the theatre, instead of to the opera or a ball, for they did not go in a cab, otherwise her skirt would not have become muddied. This, too, shows that she wore a cloth skirt, and as his shoes are not patent leathers, it is clear that neither was in evening dress."

I did n't try to get a verification of Fleming Stone's assertions; I did n't want any. Scores of times I had known him to make similar deductions, and in cases where we afterward learned the facts, he was invariably correct. So, though we did n't follow up this matter, I was sure he was right, and, even if he had n't been, it would not have weighed heavily against his large proportion of proved successes.

We separated then, as we took chairs at some distance from each other, and, with a sigh of regret that I could never hope to go far along the line in which Stone showed such proficiency, I began to read my morning paper.

Fleming Stone left the place before I did, nodding a good-by as he passed me, and a moment after, my own foot-gear being in proper condition, I, too, went out, and went straight to my office.

"Hurry up, Mr. Burroughs!" cried my office boy, as I opened the door. "You're wanted on the telephone."

Though a respectful and well-mannered boy, some excitement had made him a trifle unceremonious, and I looked at him curiously as I took up the receiver.

But with the first words I heard, the office-boy was forgotten, and my own nerves received a shock as I listened to the message. It was from the Detective Bureau with which I was connected, and the superintendent himself was directing me to go at once to West Sedgwick, where a terrible crime had just been discovered.

Mr. Joseph Crawford, a New York banker, had been found murdered in his own home.

The coroner of West Sedgwick had telephoned for a detective to be sent there at once, and I was advised to lose no time.

Lose no time, indeed! I was more anxious than any one else could possibly be, to reach the scene of the crime before significant clues were obliterated or destroyed by bungling investigators.

Without waiting for further details, I called a taxicab, and, by way of the tunnel, I reached the small New Jersey town of West Sedgwick in less than an hour.

On my way, I diverted my mind, and so forgot my impatience, by endeavoring to "deduce" the station or occupation of my fellow passengers.

One man, from the appearance of his head and hat, I concluded was a clergyman, but later I saw him draw a sporting paper from his pocket, while the flash of a huge diamond on his little finger nearly blinded me.

Again, I closely scanned a middle-aged, angular-looking woman, whose strong, sharp-featured face betokened a prim spinster, probably at the head of a girls' school, or engaged in some clerical work. However, as I passed her, on my way to leave the train, I noticed a wedding-ring on her hand, and heard her say to her companion, "No; I think a woman's sphere is in her own kitchen and nursery. How could I think otherwise, with my six children to bring up?"

After these lamentable failures, I determined not to trust much to deduction in the case I was about to investigate, but to learn actual facts from actual evidence.

The superintendent must have apprised the coroner by telephone of my immediate arrival, for a village cart from the Crawford establishment was awaiting me, and a smart groom approached and asked if I were Mr. Herbert Burroughs.

A little disappointed at having no more desirable companion on my way to the house, I climbed up beside the driver, and the groom solemnly took his place behind. Not curiosity, but a justifiable desire to learn the main facts of the case as soon as possible, led me to question the man beside me.

"We're forbidden to chatter, sir," he said, "but, bein' as you're the detective, I s'pose there's no harm. But it's little we know, after all. The master was well and sound last evenin', and this mornin' he was found dead in his own office-chair."

"You mean a private office in his home?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Crawford went to his office in New York 'most every day, but days when he did n't go, and evenin's and Sundays, he was much in his office at home, sir."

"Who discovered the tragedy?"

"I don't rightly know, sir, if it was Louis, his valet, or Lambert, the butler, but it was one or t' other, sir."

"Or both together?" I suggested.

"Yes, sir; or both together."

"Is any one suspected of the crime?"

The man hesitated a moment, and looked as if uncertain what to reply, then, as he set his jaw squarely, he said:

"Not as I knows on, sir."

"Tell me something of the town," I observed next, feeling that it was better to ask no more vital questions of a servant.

We were driving along streets of great beauty. Large and handsome dwellings, each set in the midst of extensive and finely-kept grounds, met the view on either side. Surely West Sedgwick was a delightful location for the homes of wealthy New York business men.

"Well, sir," said the coachman, with unconcealed pride, "Mr. Crawford was the head of everything in the place. His is the handsomest house and the grandest grounds. Everybody respected him and looked up to him. He had n't an enemy in the world."

This was an opening for further conjecture as to the murderer, but I preferred not to follow it up.

"That place over there," the man went on, pointing with his whip, "is Mr. Philip Crawford's house—the brother of my master, sir. Them red towers, sticking up through the trees, is the house of Mr. Lemuel Porter, a great friend of both the Crawford brothers. Next, on the left, is the home of Horace Hamilton, the great electrician. Oh, Sedgwick is full of well-known men, sir, but Joseph Crawford was king of this town. Nobody'll deny that."

I knew of Mr. Crawford's high standing in the city, and now, learning of his local preëminence, I began to think I was about to engage in what would probably be a very important case.

"Here we are, sir," said the driver, as we turned in at a fine stone gateway. "This is the Joseph Crawford place."

He spoke with a sort of reverent pride, and I afterward learned that his devotion to his late master was truly exceptional.

This probably prejudiced him in favor of the Crawford place, and all its appurtenances, for, to me, the estate was not so magnificent as some of the others we had passed. And yet, though not so large, I soon realized that every detail of art or architecture was perfect in its way, and that it was really a gem of a country home to which I had been brought.

As might be expected, many people were about. Men stood talking in groups on the veranda, while messengers were seen hastily coming or going through the open front doors.

A waiting servant at once ushered me into a large room, where I was greeted by Coroner Monroe.

I knew the man by hearsay, though we had never met before;

and by reputation, also, he knew me, for which reason, he was kind enough to say, he had specially desired my attendance on this case.

"Mr. Burroughs," he said, "I'm very glad you could get here so promptly; for the case seems to me a mysterious one, and the value of immediate investigation cannot be overestimated."

"I quite agree with you," I returned. "And now will you tell me the principal facts, as you know them, or will you depute some one else to do so?"

"I am even now getting a jury together," he said, "and so you will be able to hear all that the witnesses may say in their presence. In the meantime, if you wish to visit the scene of the crime, Mr. Parmalee will take you there."

At the sound of his name, Mr. Parmalee stepped forward and was introduced to me. He proved to be a local detective, a young man who always attended Coroner Monroe on occasions like the present; but who, owing to the rarity of such occasions in West Sedgwick, had had little experience in criminal investigation.

He seemed to be in no way jealous of my presence there, and, indeed, spoke to me with an air of comradeship, which I, perhaps unreasonably, secretly resented.

However, as I very much wanted to go at once to the room of the tragedy, I met his advances half way, and responded affably enough to his overtures.

"You see, it's this way," he said, in a confidential whisper, as we traversed the long hall: "there is no doubt in any one's mind as to who committed the murder, but no name has been mentioned yet, and nobody wants to be the first to say that name. It'll come out at the inquest, of course, and then——"

"But," I interrupted, "if the identity of the murderer is so certain, why did they send for me in such haste?"

"Oh, that was the coroner's doing. He's a bit inclined to the spectacular, is Monroe, and he wants to make the whole affair as important as possible."

We had now reached a closed door, and, at Mr. Parmalee's tap, were admitted by the inspector who was in charge of the room.

It was a beautiful apartment, far too rich and elaborate to be designated by the name of "office," as it was called by every one who spoke of it; though of course it was Mr. Crawford's office, as was shown by the immense table-desk of dark mahogany, and all the other paraphernalia of a banker's work-room, from ticker to typewriter.

But the decorations of walls and ceilings, the stained glass of the windows, the pictures, rugs, and vases, all betokened luxurious tastes that are rarely indulged in office furnishings. The room was

flooded with sunlight. Long French windows gave access to a side veranda, which in turn led down to a beautiful terrace and formal garden. But all these things were seen only in a hurried glance, and then my eyes fell on the tragic figure in the desk chair.

The body had not been moved, and would not be until after the jury had seen it, and though a ghastly sight, because of a bullet-hole in the left temple, otherwise it looked much as Mr. Crawford must have looked in life.

A handsome man, of large physique and strong, stern face, he must have been surprised, and killed instantly; for surely, given the chance, he lacked neither courage nor strength to grapple with an assailant.

I felt a deep impulse of sympathy for that splendid specimen of humanity, taken unawares, without being given a moment in which to fight for his life, and yet presumably seeing his murderer, as he seemed to have been shot directly from the front.

As I looked at that noble face, serene and dignified in its death pallor, I felt glad that my profession was such as might lead to the avenging of such a detestable crime.

And suddenly I had a revulsion of feeling against such petty methods as deductions from trifling clues. No, I would search for real evidence, human testimony, reliable witnesses, and so thorough, systematic, and persevering should my search be, that I should finally meet with success.

"Here's the clue," said Parmalee's voice, as he grasped my arm and turned me in another direction.

He pointed to a glittering article on the large desk.

It was a woman's purse, or bag, of the sort known as "gold-mesh." Perhaps six inches square, it bulged as if overcrowded with contents of some female paraphernalia.

"It's Miss Lloyd's," went on Parmalee. "She lives here, you know—Mr. Crawford's niece. She's lived here for years and years."

"And you suspect her?" I said, horrified.

"Well, you see, she's engaged to Gregory Hall—he's Mr. Crawford's secretary—and Mr. Crawford did n't approve of the match; and so—"

He shrugged his shoulders in a careless fashion, as if for a woman to shoot her uncle were an every-day affair.

But I was shocked and incredulous, and said so.

"Where is Miss Lloyd?" I asked. "Does she claim ownership of this gold bag?"

"No; of course not," returned Parmalee. "She's no fool, Florence Lloyd is n't! She's locked in her room and won't come out. Been there all the morning. Her maid says this is n't Miss Lloyd's bag, but of course she'd say that."

"Well, that question ought to be easily settled. What's in the bag?"

"Look for yourself. Monroe and I ran through the stuff, but there's nothing to say for sure whose bag it is."

I opened the pretty bauble, and let the contents fall out on the desk.

A crumpled handkerchief, a pair of white kid gloves, a little trinket known as a "vanity case," containing a tiny mirror and a tinier powder puff; a couple of small hair-pins, a newspaper clipping, and a few silver coins were all that rewarded my trouble.

Nothing definite, indeed, and yet I knew if Fleming Stone could look at the little heap of feminine belongings, he would at once tell the fair owner's age, height, and weight, if not her name and address.

"Surely this newspaper clipping must throw some light," I mused, but it proved to be only the address of a dyeing and cleaning establishment in New York City.

"This is being taken care of?" I said, and the burly inspector, who up to now had not spoken, said:

"Yes, sir! Nobody touches a thing in this room while I'm here. You, sir, are of course an exception, but no one else is allowed to meddle with anything."

This reminded me that as the detective in charge of this case, it was my privilege—indeed, my duty—to examine the papers and personal effects that were all about, in an effort to gather clues for future use. I was ignorant of many important details, but for the moment I preferred to remain so, rather than ask Parmalee.

I had formed an unreasonable prejudice against the young man, and though I carefully concealed it, I greatly wished I could pursue my search without him.

The right-hand upper drawer of the double-peDESTALLED desk was open. Seemingly, Mr. Crawford had been engaged with its contents during the latter moments of his life.

At a glance, I saw the drawer contained exceedingly valuable and important papers.

With an air of authority, intentionally exaggerated for the purpose of impressing Parmalee, I closed the drawer, and locked it with the key already in the keyhole.

This key was one of several on a key-ring, and, taking it from its place, I dropped the whole bunch in my pocket. This action at once put me in my rightful place. The two men watching me unconsciously assumed a more deferential air, and, though they said nothing, I could see that their respect for my authority had increased.

Strangely enough, after this episode, a new confidence in my own

powers took possession of me, and, shaking off the apathy that had come over me at sight of that dread figure in the chair, I set methodically to work to examine the room.

Of course I noted the position of the furniture, the state of the window-fastenings, and such things in a few moments. The many filing cabinets and indexed boxes, I glanced at, and locked those that had keys or fastenings.

Stepping out on the veranda, I looked for foot-prints. The "light snow" usually so helpful to a detective had not fallen, as it was April, and rather warm for the season. But I found many heel-marks, apparently of men's boots; yet they were not necessarily of very recent date, and I don't think much of foot-print clues, anyhow.

Then I examined the carpet, or, rather, the several rugs which ornamented the beautiful polished floor.

I found nothing but two petals of a pale yellow rose. They were crumpled, but not dry or withered, and could not have been long detached from the blossom on which they grew.

Parmalee chanced to have his back toward me as I spied them, and I picked them up and put them away in my pocket-book without his knowledge. If the stolid inspector saw me, he made no sign. Indeed, I think he would have said nothing if I had carried off the big desk itself. I looked round the room for a bouquet or vase of flowers from which the petals might have fallen, but none was there.

This far I had progressed when I heard steps in the hall, and a moment later the coroner ushered the six gentlemen of his jury into the room.

CHAPTER II.

THE INQUEST

It was just as the men came in at the door, that I chanced to notice a newspaper that lay on a small table. I picked it up with an apparent air of carelessness, and, watching my chance, unobserved by Parmalee, I put the paper away in a drawer, which I locked.

The six men, whom Coroner Monroe named over to me, by way of a brief introduction, stepped silently as they filed past the body of their late friend and neighbor.

For the jurymen had been gathered hastily from among the citizens of West Sedgwick who chanced to be passing; and as it was after eleven o'clock, they were, for the most part, men of leisure, and occupants of the handsome homes in the vicinity.

Probably none of them had ever before been called to act on a coroner's jury, and all seemed impressed with the awfulness of the crime, as well as imbued with a personal sense of sorrow.

Two of the jurors had been mentioned to me by name, by the

coachman who brought me from the station. Horace Hamilton and Lemuel Porter were near-by neighbors of the murdered man, and, I judged from their remarks, were rather better acquainted with him than were the others.

Only one juror impressed me unpleasantly. That was Mr. Orville, a youngish man, who seemed rather elated at the position in which he found himself. He fingered nearly everything on the desk; he peered carefully into the face of the victim of the crime, and he somewhat ostentatiously made notes in a small Russia leather memorandum book.

The others exhibited no such minute curiosity, and, after a few moments, they followed the coroner out of the room.

Then the doctor and his assistants came to take the body away, and I went in search of Coroner Monroe, eager for further information concerning the case, of which I really, as yet, knew but little.

The inquest was appointed for two o'clock that afternoon, so I had a couple of hours to learn what I could, and, incidentally, to find for myself an abiding-place during my stay in West Sedgwick.

"They'll probably ask you to stay here," observed Coroner Monroe, "but I advise you not to do so. I think you'll be freer and less hampered in your work if you go to the inn."

"I quite agree with you," I replied. "But I see little chance of being invited to stay here. Where is the family? Who are in it?"

"Not many. There is Miss Florence Lloyd, a niece of Mr. Crawford. That is, she is the niece of his wife. Mrs. Crawford has been dead many years, and Miss Lloyd has kept house for her uncle all that time. Then there is Mrs. Pierce, an elderly lady and a distant relative of Mr. Crawford's. That is all, except the secretary, Gregory Hall, who lives here much of the time. That is, he has a room here, but often he is in New York or elsewhere on Mr. Crawford's business."

"Mr. Crawford had an office both here and in New York?" I asked.

"Yes; and of late years he has stayed at home as much as possible. He went to New York only about three or four days in the week, and conducted his business from here the rest of the time. Young Hall is a clever fellow, and has been Mr. Crawford's right-hand man for years."

"Where is he now?"

"We think he's in New York, but have n't yet been able to locate him at Mr. Crawford's office there, or at his club. He is engaged to Miss Lloyd, though I understand that the engagement is contrary to Mr. Crawford's wishes."

"And where is Miss Lloyd,—and Mrs. Pierce?"

"They are both in their rooms. Mrs. Pierce is prostrated at the tragedy, and Miss Lloyd simply refuses to make her appearance."

"But she'll have to attend the inquest?"

"Oh, yes, of course. She'll be with us then. I think I won't say anything about her to you, as I'd rather you'd see her first with entirely unprejudiced eyes."

So he, too, thought Miss Lloyd was implicated. Well, we should see.

I was about to start out then to engage for myself a room at the Sedgwick Arms, a somewhat pretentious inn that I remembered passing on my drive from the train.

But Mr. Monroe detained me a moment, to present me to a tall, fine-looking man who had just come in.

He proved to be Philip Crawford, a brother of Joseph, and I at once observed a strong resemblance between their two faces.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Burroughs," he said. "Mr. Monroe tells me you are a clever and experienced detective, and I trust you can help us to avenge this dastardly crime. I am busy with some important matters just now, but later I shall be glad to confer with you, and be of any help I can in your investigation."

I looked at Mr. Philip Crawford curiously. Of course I didn't expect him to give way to emotional grief, but it jarred on me to hear him refer to his brother's tragic death in such cold tones, and with such a businesslike demeanor.

However, I realized I did not know the man at all, and this attitude might be due to his effort in concealing his real feelings.

I thanked him for his offer, assured him that I knew where his home was, and then went on my way to the inn.

Here, as I had confidently expected, I found pleasant, even luxurious accommodations, and at last, behind my locked door, I took from my pocket the newspaper I had brought from Mr. Crawford's office.

It seemed to me important, from the fact that it was an extra, published late the night before.

An Atlantic liner had met with a serious accident, and an extra had been hastily put forth by one of the most enterprising of our evening papers. I, myself, had bought one of these extras, about midnight; and the finding of a copy in the office of the murdered man might prove a clue to the criminal.

Partly through a general principle of caution, and partly because I felt no congeniality with Mr. Parmalee, I preferred to say nothing about the newspaper at present, but to await the disclosures of the inquest.

Shortly before two o'clock, I was back at the Crawford house, and

found the large library, where the inquest was to be held, already well filled with people. I took an inconspicuous seat, and turned my attention first to the group that comprised, without a doubt, the members of Mr. Crawford's household.

Miss Lloyd—for I knew at a glance the black-robed young woman must be she—was of a striking personality. Tall, large, handsome, she could have posed as a model for Judith, Zenobia, or any of the great and powerful feminine characters in history. I was impressed not so much by her beauty as by her effect of power and ability. I had absolutely no reason, save Parmalee's babblings, to suspect this woman of crime, but I could not rid myself of a conviction that she had every appearance of being capable of it.

Yet her face was full of contradictions. The dark eyes were haughty, even imperious; but the red, curved mouth was of a tender expression, and the chin, though firm and decided-looking, yet gave an impression of gentleness.

On the whole, she fascinated me by the very mystery of her charm, and I found my eyes involuntarily returning again and again to that beautiful face.

Her companion, a gray-haired, elderly lady, was, of course, Mrs. Pierce. She was trembling with the excitement of the occasion, and seemed to depend on Florence Lloyd's strong personality and affectionate sympathy to keep her from utter collapse.

Near the two sat a young man, who, I was told, was Gregory Hall, the secretary. He had been reached by telephone and had come out from New York, arriving about noon.

Philip Crawford and his son, an athletic-looking young chap, were also in this group, and behind them were gathered the servants of the house.

Lambert, the butler, was first interviewed, and after a few formal questions the coroner asked him to tell his own story of the early morning.

The man, a stolid, middle-aged Englishman, told in a clear and concise way the details of his discovery of his master's body.

"I came down-stairs at seven this morning," he said, "as I always do. I opened the house, I saw the cook a few moments about matters pertaining to breakfast, and I attended to my usual duties. At about half-past seven I went to Mr. Crawford's office, to set it in order for the day, and as I opened the door I saw him sitting in his chair. At first I thought he'd dropped asleep there, and been there all night, then in a moment I saw what had happened."

"Well, what did you do next?" asked the coroner, as the man paused.

"I went in search of Louis, Mr. Crawford's valet. He was just

coming down the stairs. He looked surprised, for he said Mr. Crawford was not in his room, and his bed had n't been slept in."

"Did he seem alarmed?"

"No, sir. Not knowing what I knew, he did n't. He said he supposed master had spent the night away from home."

"Well, go on. We'll hear Louis's story later."

"Well, sir, then I took Louis to the office, and we both saw the—the accident, and we wondered what to do. I was for telephoning right off to Doctor Fairchild, but Louis said first we'd better tell Miss Florence about it."

"And did you?"

"We went out in the hall, and just then Elsa, Miss Lloyd's maid, was on the stairs. So we told her, and told her to tell Miss Lloyd, and ask her for orders. Well, her orders was for us to call up Doctor Fairchild, and so we did. He came as soon as he could, and he's been in charge ever since, sir."

"A straightforward story, clearly told," observed the coroner, and then he called upon Louis, the valet. This witness, a young Frenchman, was far more nervous and excited than the calm-mannered butler, but the gist of his story corroborated Lambert's.

Asked if he was not called upon to attend his master at bed-time, he replied:

"Non, M'sieu; when Monsieur Crawford sat late in his library, or his office, he dismiss me, and say I may go to bed, or whatever I like. Almost alway he tell me that."

"And he told you this last night?"

"But yes. When I lay out his clothes for dinner, he then tell me so."

"That's all, Louis. . . . But, Lambert, one other matter. Tell us all you know of Mr. Joseph Crawford's movements last evening."

"He was at dinner, as usual, sir," said the butler, in his monotonous drawl. "There were no guests, only the family. After dinner Mr. Crawford went out for a time. He returned about nine o'clock. I saw him come in, with his own key, and I saw him go to his office. Soon after Mr. Porter called."

"Mr. Lemuel Porter?" asked the coroner.

"Yes, sir," said the butler, and Mr. Porter, who was one of the jurors, gravely nodded his head in acquiescence.

"He stayed until about ten, I should say," went on the butler, and again Mr. Porter gave an affirmative nod. "I let him out myself," went on Lambert, "and soon after that I went to the library to see if Mr. Crawford had any orders for me. He told me of some household matters he wished me to attend to to-day, and then he said

he should sit up for some time longer, and I might go to bed if I liked. A very kind and considerate man, sir, was Mr. Crawford."

"And did you then go to bed?"

"Yes, sir. I locked up all the house, except the office. Mr. Crawford always locks those windows himself, when he sits up late. The ladies had already gone to their rooms; Mr. Hall was away for the night, so I closed up everything, and went to bed. That's all I know about the matter, sir—until I came down-stairs this morning."

"You heard no sound in the night—no revolver shot?"

"No, sir. But my room is on the third floor, and at the other end of the house, sir. I could n't hear a shot fired in the office, I'm sure, sir."

"And you found no weapon of any sort in the office this morning?"

"No, sir; Louis and I both looked for that, but there was none in the room. Of that I'm sure, sir."

"That will do, Lambert."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir."

The butler returned to his place, and stood with folded hands, a sad expression in his eyes, but with an air of importance that seemed to be inseparable from him, in any circumstances.

Doctor Fairchild was called as the next witness.

He testified that he had been summoned that morning at about quarter before eight o'clock. He had gone immediately to Mr. Crawford's house, was admitted by the butler, and taken at once to the office. He found Mr. Crawford dead in his chair, shot through the left temple with a thirty-two-calibre revolver.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Lemuel Porter, who, with the other jurors, was listening attentively to all the testimony. "If the weapon was not found, how do you know its calibre?"

"I extracted the bullet from the wound," returned Doctor Fairchild, "and those who know have pronounced it to be a ball fired from a small pistol of thirty-two-calibre."

"But if Mr. Crawford had committed suicide, the pistol would have been there," said Mr. Porter, who seemed to be a more acute thinker than the other jurymen.

"Exactly," agreed the coroner. "That's why we must conclude that Mr. Crawford did not take his own life."

"Nor would he have done so," declared Doctor Fairchild. "I have known the deceased for many years. He had no reason for wishing to end his life, and, I am sure, no inclination to do so. He was shot by an alien hand, and the deed was probably committed at or near midnight."

"Thus we assume," the coroner went on, as the doctor finished his

simple statement and resumed his seat, "that Mr. Crawford remained in his office, occupied with his business matters, until midnight or later, when some person or persons came into his room, murdered him, and went away again, without making sufficient noise or disturbance to arouse the sleeping household."

"Perhaps Mr. Crawford had himself fallen asleep in his chair," suggested one of the jurors,—the Mr. Orville, who was continually taking notes in his little book.

"It is possible," said the doctor, as the remark was practically addressed to him, "but not probable. The attitude in which the body was found indicates that the victim was awake, and in full possession of his faculties. Apparently he made no resistance of any sort."

"Which seems to show," said the coroner, "that his assailant was not a burglar or tramp, for in that case he would surely have risen and tried to put him out. The fact that Mr. Crawford was evidently shot by a person standing in front of him, seems to imply that that person's attitude was friendly, and that the victim had no suspicion of the danger that threatened him."

This was clear and logical reasoning, and I looked at the coroner in admiration, until I suddenly remembered Parmalee's hateful suspicion and wondered if Coroner Monroe was preparing for an attack upon Miss Lloyd.

Gregory Hall was summoned next.

He was of the average type of young American citizen. Fairly good-looking, fairly well-groomed, and fairly well-bred. There was a frank, manly manner about him that pleased me, but there was also a something which repelled me.

I could n't quite explain it to myself, but while he had an air of extreme straightforwardness, there was also an indefinable effect of reserve. I could n't help feeling that if this man had anything to conceal, he would be quite capable of doing so under a mask of great outspokenness.

But, as it turned out, he had nothing either to conceal or reveal, for he had been away from West Sedgwick since six o'clock the night before, and knew nothing of the tragedy until he heard of it by telephone at Mr. Crawford's New York office that morning about half-past ten. This made him of no importance as a witness, but Mr. Monroe asked him a few questions.

"You left here last evening, you say?"

"On the six o'clock train to New York, yes."

"For what purpose?"

"On business for Mr. Crawford."

"Did that business occupy you last evening?"

Mr. Hall looked surprised at this question, but answered quietly:

"No; I was to attend to the business to-day. But I often go to New York for several days at a time. I have rooms there."

"And where were you last evening?" pursued the coroner.

This time Mr. Hall looked more surprised still, and said:

"As it has no bearing on the matter in hand, I prefer not to answer that rather personal question."

The coroner did not press it, but went on:

"The telephone message you received this morning, then, was the first knowledge you had of Mr. Crawford's death?"

"It was."

"And you came out here at once?"

"Yes; on the first train I could catch."

"I am sorry you resent personal questions, Mr. Hall, for I must ask you some. Are you engaged to Mr. Crawford's niece, Miss Lloyd?"

"I am."

This answer was given in a low, quiet tone, apparently without emotion of any kind, but Miss Lloyd showed a different attitude. At the words of Gregory Hall, she blushed, dropped her eyes, fingered her handkerchief nervously, and evinced just such embarrassment as might be expected from any young women, in the event of a public mention of her betrothal. And yet I had not looked for such an exhibition from Florence Lloyd. Her very evident strength of character would seem to preclude the actions of an inexperienced débâutante.

"Did Mr. Crawford approve of your engagement to his niece?" pursued Mr. Monroe.

"With all due respect, Mr. Coroner," said Gregory Hall, in his subdued but firm way, "I cannot think these questions are relevant or pertinent. Unless you can assure me that they are, I prefer not to reply."

"They are both relevant and pertinent to the matter in hand, Mr. Hall; but I am now of the opinion that they would better be asked of another witness. You are excused. I now call Miss Florence Lloyd."

CHAPTER III.

FLORENCE LLOYD

A STIR was perceptible all through the room as Miss Lloyd acknowledged by a bow of her beautiful head the summons of the coroner.

The jurors looked at her with evident sympathy and admiration, and I remembered that as they were fellow-townsmen and neighbors they probably knew the young woman well, and she was doubtless a friend of their own daughters.

It seemed as if such social acquaintance must prejudice them in her favor, and perhaps render them incapable of unbiased judgment, should her evidence be incriminating. But in my secret heart, I confess, I felt glad of this. I was glad of anything that would keep even a shadow of suspicion away from this girl to whose fascinating charm I had already fallen a victim.

"Your name?" said the coroner briefly, as if conquering his own sympathy by an unnecessarily formal tone.

"Florence Lloyd," was the answer.

"Your position in this house?"

"I am the niece of Mrs. Joseph Crawford, who died many years ago. Since her death I have lived with Mr. Crawford, occupying in every respect the position of his daughter, though not legally adopted as such."

"Mr. Crawford was always kind to you?"

"More than kind. He was generous and indulgent, and, though not of an affectionate nature, he was always courteous and gentle."

"Will you tell us of the last time you saw him alive?"

Miss Lloyd hesitated. She showed no embarrassment, no trepidation; she merely seemed to be thinking.

Her gaze slowly wandered over the faces of the servants, Mrs. Pierce, Mr. Philip Crawford, the jurors, and, lastly, dwelt for a moment on the anxious, worried countenance of Gregory Hall.

Then she said slowly, but in an even, unemotional voice: "It was last night at dinner. After dinner was over, my uncle went out, and before he returned I had gone to my room."

"Was there anything unusual about his appearance or demeanor at dinner-time?"

"No; I noticed nothing of the sort."

"Was he troubled or annoyed about any matter, that you know of?"

"He was annoyed about one matter that has been annoying him for some time: that is, my engagement to Mr. Hall."

Apparently this was the answer the coroner had expected, for he nodded his head in a satisfied way.

The jurors, too, exchanged intelligent glances, and I realized that the acquaintances of the Crawfords were well informed as to Miss Lloyd's romance.

"He did not approve of that engagement?" went on the coroner, though he seemed to be stating a fact, rather than asking a question.

"He did not," returned Miss Lloyd, and her color rose as she observed the intense interest manifest among her hearers.

"And the subject was discussed at the dinner-table?"

"It was."

"What was the tenor of the conversation?"

"To the effect that I must break the engagement."

"Which you refused to do?"

"I did."

Her cheeks were scarlet now, but a determined note had crept into her voice, and she looked at her betrothed husband with an air of affectionate pride that, it seemed to me, ought to lift any man into the seventh heaven. But I noted Mr. Hall's expression with surprise. Instead of gazing adoringly at this girl who was thus publicly proving her devotion to him, he sat with eyes cast down, and frowning—positively frowning—while his fingers played nervously with his watch-chain.

Surely this case required my closest attention, for I place far more confidence in deductions from facial expression and tones of the voice, than from the discovery of small, inanimate objects.

"Who else heard this conversation, besides yourself, Miss Lloyd?"

"Mrs. Pierce was at the table with us, and the butler was in the room much of the time."

The purport of the coroner's question was obvious. Plainly he meant that she might as well tell the truth in the matter, as her testimony could easily be overthrown or corroborated.

Miss Lloyd deliberately looked at the two persons mentioned. Mrs. Pierce was trembling as with nervous apprehension, but she looked steadily at Miss Lloyd, with eyes full of loyalty and devotion.

The butler, Lambert, who stood with folded arms, gazed straight ahead with an inscrutable countenance, but his set lips and square jaw betokened decision.

As I read it, Miss Lloyd knew, as she looked, that should she tell an untruth about that talk at the dinner-table, Mrs. Pierce would repeat and corroborate her story; but Lambert would refute her, and would state veraciously what his master had said. Clearly, it was useless to attempt a false report, and, with a little sigh, Miss Lloyd seemed to resign herself to her fate, and calmly awaited the coroner's further questions.

But though still calm, she had lost her poise to some degree. The lack of responsive glances from Gregory Hall's eyes seemed to perplex her. The eager interest of the six jurymen made her restless and embarrassed. The coroner's abrupt questions frightened her, and I feared her self-enforced calm must sooner or later give way.

"What was your uncle's response when you refused to break your engagement to Mr. Hall?" was the next inquiry.

Again Miss Lloyd was silent for a moment, while she directed her gaze successively at several individuals. This time she favored Mr. Randolph, who was Mr. Crawford's lawyer, and Philip Crawford, the

dead man's brother. After looking in turn at these two, and glancing for a moment at Philip Crawford's son, who sat by his side, she said, in a lower voice than she had before used:

"He said he would change his will, and leave none of his fortune to me."

"His will, then, has been made in your favor?"

"Yes; he has always told me I was to be sole heiress to his estate, except for some comparatively small bequests."

"Has he ever threatened this proceeding before?"

"He has hinted it, but not so definitely."

"Did Mr. Hall know of Mr. Crawford's objection to his suit?"

"He did."

"Did he know of your uncle's hints of disinheritance?"

"He did."

"What was his attitude in the matter?"

Florence Lloyd looked proudly at her lover.

"The same as mine," she said. "We both regretted my uncle's protest, but we had no intention of letting it stand in the way of our happiness."

Still Gregory Hall did not look at his fiancée. He sat motionless, preoccupied, and seemingly lost in deep thought, oblivious to all that was going on.

Whether his absence from Sedgwick at the time of the murder made him feel that he was in no way implicated, and so the inquiry held no interest for him; or whether he was looking ahead and wondering whither these vital questions were leading Florence Lloyd, I had no means of knowing. Certainly, he was a man of most impassive demeanor and marvelous self-control.

"Then, in effect, you defied your uncle?"

"In effect, I suppose I did; but not in so many words. I always tried to urge him to see the matter in a different light."

"What was his objection to Mr. Hall as your husband?"

"Must I answer that?"

"Yes; I think so; as I must have a clear understanding of the whole affair."

"Well, then, he told me that he had no objection to Mr. Hall, personally. But he wished me to make what he called a more brilliant alliance. He wanted me to marry a man of greater wealth and social position."

The scorn in Miss Lloyd's voice for her uncle's ambitions was so unmistakable that it made her whole answer seem a compliment to Mr. Hall, rather than the reverse. It implied that the sterling worth of the young secretary was far more to be desired than the riches and rank advocated by her uncle. This time Gregory Hall

looked at the speaker with a faint smile, that showed appreciation, if not adoration.

But I did not gather from his attitude that he did not adore his beautiful bride-to-be; I only concluded that he was not one to show his feelings in public.

"In what way was your uncle more definite in his threat last night, than he had been heretofore?" the coroner continued.

Miss Lloyd gave a little gasp, as if the question she had been dreading had come at last. She looked at the inexorable face of the butler, she looked at Mr. Randolph, and then flashed a half-timid glance at Hall, as she answered:

"He said that unless I promised to give up Mr. Hall, he would go last night to Mr. Randolph's and have a new will drawn up."

This speech produced a startling and widespread sensation.

Mr. Orville, the fussy young juror, uttered an exclamation of an angry nature, and scribbled industriously in his rapidly-filling notebook.

Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Porter, who were the Crawfords' nearest neighbors, conversed together in indignant whispers.

Mr. Philip Crawford looked astounded, and also dismayed, which surprised me, as I had understood that had it not been for Miss Lloyd, he himself would have been his brother's heir.

Mr. Randolph showed only a lawyer-like, non-committal expression, and Gregory Hall, too, looked absolutely impassive.

The coroner grew more alert, as if he had discovered something of definite import, and asked eagerly:

"Did he do so? Did he go to his lawyer's and make another will?"

Miss Lloyd's cold calm had returned, and seemed to rebuke the coroner's excited interest.

"I do not know," she replied. "He went out after dinner, as I have told you, but I retired to my bedroom before he came home."

"And you did not come down-stairs again last night?"

"I did not."

The words were spoken in a clear, even tone, but something made me doubt their truth. It was not the voice or inflection; there was no hesitation or stammer, but a sudden and momentary droop of Miss Lloyd's eyelids seemed to me to give the lie to her words.

I wondered if Gregory Hall had the same thought, for he slowly raised his own eyes and looked at her steadily for the first time since her testimony began.

She did not look at him. Instead, she was staring at the butler. Either she had reason to fear his knowledge, or I was fanciful. With an endeavor to shake off these shadows of suspicion, I chanced to

look at Parmalee. To my disgust, he was quite evidently gloating over the disclosures being made by the witness. I felt my anger rise, and I determined then and there that if suspicion of guilt or complicity should by any chance light on that brave and lovely girl, I would make the effort of my life to clear her from it.

"You did not come down again," the coroner went on pointedly, "to ask your uncle if he *had* changed his will?"

"No, I did not," she replied, with such a ring of truth in her scornful voice, that my confidence returned, and I truly believed her.

"Then you were not in your uncle's office last evening at all?"

"I was not."

"Nor through the day?"

She reflected a moment. "No, nor through the day. It chanced I had no occasion to go in there yesterday at all."

"Is this yours?" asked Mr. Monroe, suddenly whisking into sight the gold-mesh bag.

Probably his intent had been to startle her, and thus catch her off her guard. If so, he succeeded, for the girl was certainly startled, if only at the suddenness of the query.

"N—no," she stammered; "it's—it's not mine."

"Are you sure?" the coroner went on, a little more gently, doubtless moved by her agitation.

"I'm—I'm quite sure. Where did you find it?"

"What sized gloves do you wear, Miss Lloyd?"

"Number six." She said this mechanically, as if thinking of something else, and her face was white.

"These are number six," said the coroner, as he took a pair of gloves from the bag. "Think again, Miss Lloyd. Do you not own a gold-chain bag, such as this?"

"I have one something like that—or, rather, I did have one."

"Ah! And what did you do with it?"

"I gave it to my maid, Elsa, some days ago."

"Why did you do that?"

"Because I was tired of it, and it was a trifle worn, and I had ceased to care to carry it."

"Is it not a somewhat expensive trinket to turn over to your maid?"

"No; they are not real gold. At least, I mean mine was not. It was gilt over silver, and cost only about twelve or fourteen dollars when new."

"What did you usually carry in it?"

"What every woman carries in such a bag. Handkerchief, some small change, perhaps a vanity-box, gloves, tickets—whatever would be needed on an afternoon's calling or shopping tour."

"Miss Lloyd, you have enumerated almost exactly the articles in this bag."

"Then that is a coincidence, for it is not my bag."

The girl was entirely self-possessed again, and even a little aggressive. Needless to say, I believed her statements, and needless, too, to assert that Parmalee did not.

"Is your maid present?" asked the coroner. "Let her be summoned."

Elsa came forward, a pretty, timid young girl, of German effects.

"Have you ever seen this bag before?" asked the coroner, holding it up before her.

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"This morning, sir. Lambert showed it to me, sir. He said he found it in Mr. Crawford's office."

The girl was very pale, and trembled pitifully. She seemed afraid of the coroner, of Lambert, of Miss Lloyd, and of the jury. It might have been merely the unreasonable fear of an ignorant mind, but it had the appearance of some more definite apprehension.

"Is it Miss Lloyd's bag?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Don't you *know*? As her personal maid, you must be acquainted with her belongings."

"Yes, sir. No, it is n't hers, sir."

But as this statement was made after a swift but noticeable glance of inquiry at her mistress, a slight distrust of Elsa formed in my own mind, and probably in the minds of others.

"She has one like this, has she not?"

"She—she did have, sir; but she—she gave it to me."

"Yes? Then go and get it and let us see it."

"I have n't it now, sir. I—I gave it away."

"Oh, you gave it away! To whom? Can you get it back?"

"No, sir; I gave it to my cousin, who sailed for Germany last week."

Miss Lloyd looked up in surprise, and that look of surprise told against her. I could see Parmalee's eyes gleam as he concluded in his own mind that the bag story was all false, was made up between mistress and maid, and that the part about the departing cousin was an artistic touch added by Elsa.

The coroner, too, seemed inclined to disbelieve the present witness, and he sat thoughtfully snapping the catch of the bag.

"If this is not your bag, Miss Lloyd," he said, with some asperity, "how did it get on Mr. Crawford's desk late last night? The butler has assured me it was not there when he looked in at a little after

ten o'clock. Yet this morning it lay there, in plain sight on the desk. Whose bag is it?"

"I have not the slightest idea," said Miss Lloyd firmly; "but, I repeat, it is not mine."

The trend of the coroner's questions was showing itself. If this bag could be proved to be Miss Lloyd's, it indicated her presence in the office after ten o'clock the night before, and this she had denied.

If she and Elsa were in collusion to deny her ownership of the bag, it would be hard to prove the contrary, for the men-servants could not be supposed to know, and I had no doubt Mrs. Pierce would testify as Miss Lloyd did on any matter.

I was sorry not to put more confidence in the truth of the testimony I was hearing, but I am, perhaps, sceptical by nature. And, too, if Florence Lloyd were in any way implicated in the death of her uncle, I felt pretty sure she would not hesitate at untruth.

My sympathy, of course, was with her, but my duty was plain. As a detective, I must investigate fairly, or give up the case.

At this juncture, I knew the point at issue was the presence of Miss Lloyd in the office last night, and the two yellow rose-petals I had picked up on the floor might prove a clue.

Writing a few lines on a slip of paper, I sent it to the coroner, and awaited his further questioning.

He looked a little mystified as he read my note, but spoke again to Elsa.

"At what time did your mistress go to her room last evening?"

"At about ten o'clock, sir. I was waiting there for her, and so I am sure."

"Did she at once retire?"

"No, sir. She changed her evening gown for a tea-gown, and then said she should sit up for an hour or so and write letters, and I need n't wait."

"You left her then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Miss Lloyd wear any flowers at dinner last evening?"

"No, sir. There were no guests—only the family."

"Ah, quite so. But did she, by chance, pin on any flowers after she went to her room?"

"Why, yes, sir; she did. A box of roses had come for her by a messenger, and when she found them in her room, she pinned one on the lace of her tea-gown."

"Yes? And what time did the flowers arrive?"

"While Miss Lloyd was at dinner, sir. I took them from the box and put them in water, sir."

"And what sort of flowers were they?"

"Yellow roses, sir."

"That will do, Elsa. You are excused."

The girl looked bewildered, as she returned to her place among the other servants, and Miss Lloyd looked a little bewildered also.

But then, for that matter, nobody understood the reason for the questions about the flowers, and though most of the jury merely looked preternaturally wise on the subject, Mr. Orville scribbled it all down in his little book. I was glad to see the man keep up his indefatigable note-taking. If the reporters or stenographers missed any points, I could merely get them from him. But now the coroner was talking very gravely to Florence Lloyd.

"Do you corroborate," he was saying, "the statements of your maid about the flowers that were sent you last evening?"

"I do," she replied.

"From whom did they come?"

"From Mr. Hall."

"Mr. Hall," said the coroner, turning toward the young man, "how could you send flowers to Miss Lloyd last evening if you were in New York City?"

"Easily," was the cool reply. "I left Sedgwick on the six o'clock train. On my way to the station I stopped at a florist's and ordered some roses sent to Miss Lloyd. If they did not arrive until she was at dinner, they were not sent immediately, as the florist promised."

"When did you receive them, Miss Lloyd?"

"They were in my room when I went up there at about ten o'clock last evening," she replied, and her face showed her wonderment at these explicit questions.

"And you pinned one on your gown?"

"I tucked it in among the laces at my throat, yes."

"Miss Lloyd, do you still persist in saying you did not go downstairs again, to your uncle's office?"

"I did not," she repeated, but she turned white, and her voice was scarce more than a whisper.

"Then," said Coroner Monroe, "how did two petals of a yellow rose happen to be on the floor in the office this morning?"

CHAPTER IV.

YELLOW ROSES

If any one expected to see Miss Lloyd faint or collapse at this crisis he must have been disappointed, and as I had confidently expected such a scene, I was completely surprised at her quick recovery of self-possession.

For an instant she had seemed stunned by the coroner's question,

and her eyes had wandered vaguely round the room, as if in a vain search for help. Then they rested on Gregory Hall, and, though he gave her no answering look, for some reason her poise returned like a flash. It was as if she had been invigorated by a cold douche.

Determination fairly shone in her dark eyes, and her mouth showed a more decided line than I had yet seen in its red curves, as with a cold, almost hard voice she replied:

"I have no idea. We have many flowers in the house, always."

"But I have learned that there were no other yellow roses in the house yesterday."

Miss Lloyd was not hesitant now. She replied quickly to the coroner's remarks, and it was with an almost eager haste that she said:

"Then I can only imagine that my uncle had some lady visitor in his office late last evening."

The girl's mood had changed utterly; her tone was almost fliprant, and more than one of the jurors looked at her in wonderment.

Mr. Porter, especially, cast on her a glance of fatherly solicitude, and I was sure that he felt, as I did, that the strain was becoming too much for her.

The coroner looked a little uncomfortable, for he began to note the tide of sympathy turning toward the troubled girl.

"Yellow roses do not necessarily imply a lady visitor," he said, rather more kindly. "A man in evening dress might have worn one."

To his evident surprise, as well as to my own, this remark, intended to be soothing, had quite the opposite effect.

"I do not agree with you," said Miss Lloyd, quite angrily; "and, any way, the gold bag surely implies that a woman was there!"

"It seems to," said Mr. Monroe, and then, unable longer to keep up her brave resistance, Florence Lloyd fainted.

Mrs. Pierce wrung her hands and moaned in a helpless fashion. Elsa started forward to attend her young mistress, but it was the two neighbors who were jurors, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Porter, who carried the unconscious girl from the room.

Gregory Hall looked concerned, but made no movement to aid, and I marvelled afresh at such strange actions in a man betrothed to a particularly beautiful woman.

Several women in the audience hurried from the room, and in a few moments the two jurors returned.

"Miss Lloyd will soon be all right, I think," said Mr. Porter to the coroner. "My wife is with her, and one or two other ladies. I think we may proceed with our work here."

There was something about Mr. Lemuel Porter that made men

accept his dictum, and without further remark Mr. Monroe called the next witness, Mr. Roswell Randolph, and a tall man, with an intellectual face, came forward.

In answer to a few formal questions, he stated that he had been Mr. Crawford's legal adviser for many years, and had entire charge of all such matters as required legal attention.

"Did you draw up the late Mr. Crawford's will?" asked the coroner.

"Yes; after the death of his wife—about twelve years ago."

"And what were the terms of that will?"

"Except for some minor bequests, the bulk of his fortune was bequeathed to Miss Florence Lloyd."

"Have you changed that will in any way, or drawn a later one?"

"No."

It was by the merest chance that I was looking at Gregory Hall, as the lawyer gave this answer.

It required no fine perception to understand the look of relief and delight that fairly flooded his countenance. To be sure, it was quickly suppressed, and his former mask of indifference and preoccupation assumed, but I knew as well as if he had put it into words, that he had trembled lest Miss Lloyd had been disinherited before her uncle had met his death in the night.

This gave me many new thoughts, but before I could formulate them, I heard the coroner going on with his questions.

"Did Mr. Crawford visit you last evening?"

"Yes; he was at my house for perhaps half an hour or more between eight and nine o'clock."

"Did he refer to the subject of changing his will?"

"He did. That was his errand. He distinctly stated his intention of making a new will, and asked me to come to his office this morning and draw up the instrument."

"But as that cannot now be done, the will in favor of Miss Lloyd still stands?"

"It does," said Mr. Randolph, and, though he used no undue emphasis, I judged that so far as the fortune of the late Mr. Crawford was concerned, the lawyer was glad that it would belong to the heiress who had been brought up to look upon it as her own.

As for Gregory Hall, he seemed like a man freed from a great anxiety. Though still calm and reserved in appearance, he was less nervous, and quietly awaited further developments. His attitude was not hard to understand. Mr. Crawford had objected to his secretary's engagement to his niece, and now Mr. Crawford's objections could no longer matter. Again, it was not surprising that Mr. Hall should be glad to learn that his fiancée was the heiress she had supposed her-

self to be. Even though he were marrying the girl simply for love of her, a large fortune in addition was by no means to be despised. At any rate, I concluded that Gregory Hall thought so.

Coroner Monroe drew a long sigh. Clearly, the man was becoming more and more apprehensive, and really dreaded to go on with the proceedings, because he was fearful of what might be disclosed thereby.

The gold bag still lay on the table before him; the yellow rose petals were not yet satisfactorily accounted for; Miss Lloyd's agitation and sudden loss of consciousness, though not surprising in the circumstances, were a point in her disfavor. And now the revelation that Mr. Crawford was actually on the point of disinheriting his niece made it impossible to ignore the obvious connection between that fact and the event of the night.

But no one had put the thought into words, and none seemed inclined to.

Mechanically, Mr. Monroe called the next witness on his list, and Mrs. Pierce answered. She was trembling and unstrung, but she replied to the questions put to her.

Her testimony, however, added little to that already recorded. She admitted that Crawford and Florence had had an argument at the dinner table which had resulted in high words on both sides. She said that Mr. Crawford had stated clearly that unless Florence consented to break her engagement with Gregory Hall, he would go that very evening to Mr. Randolph's and have a new will made which should disinherit Florence, except for a small annuity.

"And what did Miss Lloyd reply to this threat?" asked the coroner.

"She said," replied Mrs. Pierce, in her plaintive tones, "that her uncle might do as he chose about that; but she would never give up Mr. Hall."

At this moment Gregory Hall looked more manly than I had yet seen him.

Though he modestly dropped his eyes at this tacit tribute to his worthiness, yet he squared his shoulders, and showed a justifiable pride in the love thus evinced for him.

"Was the subject discussed further?" pursued the coroner.

"No; nothing more was said about it after that."

"When Mr. Crawford left the house, did you and Miss Lloyd know where he was going?"

"We knew no more than he had said at the table. He said nothing when he went away."

"How did you and Miss Lloyd spend the remainder of the evening?"

"It was but a short evening. We sat in the music-room for a time, but at about ten o'clock we both went up to our rooms."

"Had Mr. Crawford returned then?"

"Yes, he came in perhaps an hour earlier. We heard him come in at the front door, and go at once to his office."

"You did not see him, or speak to him?"

"We did not. He had a caller during the evening. It was Mr. Porter, I have since learned."

"Did Miss Lloyd express no interest as to whether he had changed his will or not?"

"Miss Lloyd did n't mention the will, or her engagement, to me at all. We talked entirely of other matters."

"Was Miss Lloyd in her usual mood or spirits?"

"She seemed a little quiet, but not at all what you might call worried."

"And you both went upstairs at ten. Was that unusually early for you?"

"Well, unless we have guests, we often go at ten or half-past ten."

"And did you see Miss Lloyd again that night?"

"Yes; about half an hour later, I went to her room for a book I wanted."

"Was the maid, Elsa, there?"

"Miss Lloyd had just dismissed her for the night."

"What was Miss Lloyd doing when you went to her room?"

"She was looking over some gowns that she proposed sending to the cleaner's."

The coroner fairly jumped. He remembered the newspaper clipping of a cleaner's advertisement, which was even now in the gold bag before him. Though all the jurors had seen it, it had not been referred to in the presence of the women.

Recovering himself at once, he said quietly: "Was not that rather work for Miss Lloyd's maid?"

"Oh, Elsa would pack and send them, of course," said Mrs. Pierce carelessly. "Miss Lloyd was merely deciding which ones needed cleaning."

"Do you know where they were to be sent?"

Mrs. Pierce looked a little surprised at this question.

"Miss Lloyd always sends her things to Carter & Brown's," she said.

Now, Carter & Brown was the firm name on the advertisement, and it was evident at once that the coroner considered this a damaging admission.

He sat looking greatly troubled, but before he spoke again, Mr.

Parmalee made an observation that decidedly raised that young man in my estimation.

"Well," he said, "that's pretty good proof that the gold bag does n't belong to Miss Lloyd."

"How so?" asked the coroner, who had thought quite the contrary.

"Why, if Miss Lloyd always sends her goods to be cleaned to Carter & Brown, why would she need to cut their address from a newspaper and save it?"

At first I thought the young man's deduction distinctly clever, but on second thought I was n't so sure. Miss Lloyd might have wanted that address for a dozen good reasons. To my mind, it proved neither her ownership of the gold bag, nor the contrary.

In fact, I thought the most important indication that the bag might be hers lay in the story Elsa told about the cousin who sailed to Germany. Somehow that sounded untrue to me, but I was more than willing to believe it if I could.

I longed for Fleming Stone, who, I felt sure, could learn from the bag and its contents the whole truth about the crime and the criminal.

But I had been called to take charge of the case, and my pride forbade me to call on any one for help.

Of course the coroner's inquest was not formally conducted as a trial by jury would be, and so any one spoke, if he chose, and the coroner seemed really glad when suggestions were offered him.

At this point Philip Crawford rose.

"It is impossible," he said, "not to see whither these questions are tending. But you are on the wrong tack, Mr. Coroner. No matter how evidence may *seem* to point toward Florence Lloyd's association with this crime, it is only seeming. That gold bag might have been hers and it might not. But if she says it is n't, why, then *it is n't!* Notwithstanding the state of affairs between my brother and his niece, there is not the shadow of a possibility that the young woman is implicated in the slightest degree, and the sooner you leave her name out of consideration, and turn your search into other channels, the sooner you will find the real criminal."

It was not so much the words of Philip Crawford, as the sincere way in which they were spoken, that impressed me. Surely he was right; surely this beautiful girl was neither principal nor accessory in the awful crime which, by a strange coincidence, gave to her her fortune and her lover.

"Mr. Crawford's right," said Lemuel Porter. "If this jury allows itself to be misled by a gold purse and two petals of a yellow rose, we are unworthy to sit on this case. Why, Mr. Coroner, the long French windows in the office were open, or, at least, unfastened all

through the night. We have that from the butler's testimony. He did n't lock them last night; they were found unlocked this morning. Therefore, I hold that an intruder, either man or woman, may have come in during the night, accomplished the fatal deed, and departed without any one being the wiser. That this intruder was a woman, is evidenced by the bag she left behind her. For, as Mr. Crawford has said, if Miss Lloyd denies the ownership of that bag, it is not hers."

After all, these declarations were proof, of a sort. If Mr. Porter and Mr. Philip Crawford, who had known Florence Lloyd for years, spoke thus positively of her innocence, it could not be doubted.

And yet, of course, they would be zealous in her behalf. To a disinterested observer, there *was* evidence against her, and, moreover, motive and opportunity were only too clearly shown.

The speeches of these two men, which amounted to an arraignment and a vindication almost in the same breath, had its effect on the assembly.

Mrs. Pierce began to weep silently. Gregory Hall looked startled, as if the mere idea of Miss Lloyd's implication was a new thought to him. Lawyer Randolph looked considerably disturbed, and I at once suspected that his legal mind would not allow him to place too much dependence on the statements of the girl's sympathetic friends.

Mr. Hamilton, another of the jurors whom I liked, seemed to be thoughtfully weighing the evidence. He was not so well acquainted with Miss Lloyd as the two men who had just spoken in her behalf, and he made a remark somewhat diffidently.

"I agree," he said, "with the sentiments just expressed; but I also think that we should endeavor to find some further clues or evidence. Had Mr. Crawford any enemies who would come at night to kill him? Or are there any valuables missing? Could robbery have been the motive?"

"It does not seem so," replied the coroner. "Nothing is known to be missing. Mr. Crawford's watch and pocket money were not disturbed."

"The absence of the weapon is a strange factor in the case," put in Mr. Orville, apparently desirous of having his voice heard as well as those of the other jurors.

"Yes," agreed Mr. Monroe; "and yet it is not strange that the criminal carried away with him what might have been a proof of his identity."

"Does Miss Lloyd own a pistol?" blurted out Mr. Parmalee.

Truly, that man was devoid of all good taste and even the rudimentary principles of good breeding.

Gregory Hall gave him an indignant look, but Coroner Monroe seemed rather glad to have the question raised—probably so that it could be settled at once in the negative.

And it was.

"No," replied Mrs. Pierce, when the query was put to her. "Both Florence and I are desperately afraid of firearms. We should n't dream of owning a pistol—either of us."

Of course, this was significant, but in no way decisive. Granting that Miss Lloyd could have been the criminal, it would have been possible for her secretly to procure a revolver, and secretly to dispose of it afterward. Then, too, a small revolver had been used—a thirty-two calibre. To be sure, this did not necessarily imply that a woman had used it, but, taken in connection with the bag and the rose petals, it gave food for thought.

But the coroner seemed to think Mrs. Pierce's assertions greatly in Miss Lloyd's favor, and, being at the end of his list of witnesses, he inquired if any one else in the room knew of anything that could throw light on the matter.

No one responded to this invitation, and the coroner then directed the jury to retire to find a verdict.

The six men passed into another room, and I think no one who awaited their return apprehended any other result than the somewhat unsatisfactory one of "person or persons unknown."

And this was what the foreman announced when the jury returned after their short colloquy.

Then, as a jury, they were dismissed, but from that moment the mystery of Joseph Crawford's death became the absorbing thought of all West Sedgwick.

"The murderer of my brother shall be found and brought to justice!" declared Philip Crawford, and all present seemed to echo his vow.

Then and there, Mr. Crawford retained Lawyer Randolph to help him in running down the villain, and, turning to me, asked to engage my services also.

To this, I readily agreed, for I greatly desired to go on with the matter, and cared little whether I worked for an individual or for the State.

Of course Mr. Crawford's determination to find the murderer proved anew his conviction that Florence Lloyd was above all suspicion, but in the face of certain details of the evidence so far, I could not feel so absolutely certain of this.

However, it was my business to follow up every clue, or apparent clue, and every bit of evidence, and this I made up my mind to do, regardless of consequences.

CHAPTER V.

THE WILL.

FOR the next two days the Crawford house presented the appearance usual in any home during the days immediately preceding a funeral.

By tacit consent, all reference to the violence of Mr. Crawford's death was avoided, and a rigorous formality was the keynote of all the ceremonies. The servants were garbed in correct mourning, the ladies of the house refused to see anybody, and all personal callers were met by Philip Crawford or his wife, while business acquaintances were received by Gregory Hall.

As private secretary, of course Mr. Hall was in full charge of Mr. Crawford's papers and personal effects. But, in addition to this, as the prospective husband of the heiress, he was practically the head of the house.

He showed no elation or ostentation at this state of affairs, but carried himself with an air of quiet dignity, tinged with a suggestion of sadness, which, if merely conventional, seemed none the less sincere.

I soon learned that the whole social atmosphere of West Sedgwick was one of extreme formality, and everything was done in accordance with the most approved conventions. Therefore, I found I could get no chance for a personal conversation with Miss Lloyd until after the funeral.

I had, however, more or less talk with Gregory Hall, and as I became acquainted with him, I liked him less.

He was of a cold and calculating disposition, and when we were alone, he did not hesitate to gloat openly over his bright prospects.

"Terrible thing, to be put out of existence like that," he said, as we sat in Mr. Crawford's office, looking over some papers; "but it solved a big problem for Florence and me. However, we'll be married as soon as we decently can, and then we'll go abroad, and forget the tragic part of it all."

"I suppose you have n't a glimmer of a suspicion as to who did it," I ventured.

"No, I have n't. Not the faintest notion. But I wish you could find out. Of course, nobody holds up that bag business as against Florence, but—it's uncomfortable all the same. I wish I'd been here that night. I'm 'most sure I'd have heard a shot, or something."

"Where were you?" I said, in a careless tone.

Hall drew himself up stiffly. "Excuse me," he said. "I declined to answer that question before. Since I was not in West Sedgwick, it can matter to no one where I was."

"Oh, that's all right," I returned affably, for I had no desire

to get his ill will. "But of course we detectives have to ask questions. By the way, where did you buy Miss Lloyd's yellow roses?"

"See here," said Gregory Hall, with a petulant expression, "I don't want to be questioned. I'm not on the witness-stand, and, as I've told you, I'm uncomfortable already about these so-called 'clues' that seem to implicate Miss Lloyd. So, if you please, I'll say nothing."

"All right," I responded, "just as you like."

I went away from the house, thinking how foolish people could be. I could easily discover where he bought the roses, as there were only three florists' shops in West Sedgwick. If he had answered casually, I probably should not have followed up the matter at all; but as he seemed to fear further developments from the roses, I went at once to hunt up the florist who sold them.

Assuming he would naturally go to the shop nearest the railroad station, and which was also on the way from the Crawford house, I went there first, and found my assumption correct.

The florist was more than willing to talk on the subject.

"Yes, sir," he said; "I sold those roses to Mr. Hall—sold 'em to him myself. He wanted something extra nice, and I had just a dozen of those big yellow beauties. No, I don't raise my own flowers. I get 'em from the city. And so I had just that dozen, and I sent 'em right up. Well, there was some delay, for two of my boys were out to supper, and I waited for one to get back."

"And you had no other roses just like these in stock?"

"No, sir. Had n't had for a week or more. Haven't any now. May not get any more at all. They're a scarce sort, at best, and specially so this year."

"And you sent Miss Lloyd the whole dozen?"

"Yes, sir; twelve. I like to put in an extra one or two when I can, but that time I could n't. There was n't another rose like them short of New York City."

I thanked the florist, and, guessing that he was not above it, I gave him a more material token of my gratitude for his information, and then walked slowly back to my room at the inn.

Since there were no other roses of that sort in West Sedgwick that evening, it seemed to me as if Florence Lloyd must have gone down to her uncle's office after having pinned the blossom on her bodice. The only other possibility was that some intruder had entered by way of the French window, wearing or carrying a similar flower, and that this intruder had come from New York, or at least from some place other than West Sedgwick. It was too absurd. Murderers don't go about decked with flowers, and yet at midnight a man in evening dress was not impossible, and evening dress might easily imply a boutonnière.

Well, this well-dressed man I had conjured up in my mind must have come from out of town, or else whence the flower, after all?

And then I bethought myself of that late newspaper. An extra, printed probably as late as eleven o'clock at night, must have been brought out to West Sedgwick by a traveller on some late train. Why not Gregory Hall, himself? I let my imagination run riot for a minute. Mr. Hall refused to say where he was on the night of the murder. Why not assume that he had come out from New York, in evening dress, at or about midnight. This would account for the newspaper and the yellow rose petals, for, if he bought a boutonnière in the city, how probable he would select the same flower he had just sent his fiancée.

I rather fancied the idea of Gregory Hall as the criminal. He had the same motive as Miss Lloyd. He knew of her uncle's objection to their union, and his threat of disinheritance. How easy for him to come out late from New York, on a night when he was not expected, and remove forever the obstacle to his future happiness!

I drew myself up with a start. This was not detective work. This was mere idle speculation. I must shake it off, and set about collecting some real evidence.

But the thought still clung to me; mere speculation it might be, but it was founded on the same facts that already threw suspicion on Florence Lloyd. With the exception of the gold bag—and that she disclaimed—such evidence as I knew of pointed toward Mr. Hall as well as toward Miss Lloyd.

I went to see the district attorney, a man named Goodrich. Although the case was now in his hands, he had made little or no progress as yet.

He said nothing could be done until after the funeral and the reading of the will, which ceremonies would occur that afternoon.

I talked but little to Mr. Goodrich, yet I soon discovered that he strongly suspected Miss Lloyd of the crime, either as principal or accessory.

"But I can't believe it," I objected. "A girl, delicately brought up, in refined and luxurious surroundings, does not deliberately commit an atrocious crime."

"A woman thwarted in her love affair will do almost anything," declared Mr. Goodrich. "I have had more experience than you, my boy, and I advise you not to bank too much on the refined and luxurious surroundings. Sometimes such things foster crime instead of preventing it. But the truth will come out, and soon, I think. The evidence that seems to point to Miss Lloyd can be easily proven or disproved, once we get at the work in earnest. That coroner's jury was made up of men who were friends and neighbors of Mr. Crawford.

They were so prejudiced by sympathy for Miss Lloyd, and indignation at the unknown criminal, that they could n't give unbiased judgment. But we will yet see justice done. If Miss Lloyd is innocent, we can prove it. But remember the provocation she was under. Remember the opportunity she had, to visit her uncle alone in his office, after every one else in the house was asleep. Remember that she had a motive—a strong motive—and no one else had."

"Except Mr. Gregory Hall," I said meaningly.

"Yes; I grant he had the same motive. But he is known to have left town at six that evening, and did not return until nearly noon the next day. That lets him out."

"Yes, unless he came back at midnight, and then went back to the city again."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Goodrich. "That's fanciful. Why, the latest train—the theatre train, as we call it—gets in at one o'clock, and it's always full of our society people returning from gayeties in New York. He would have been seen had he come on that train, and there is no later one."

I did n't stay to discuss the matter further. Indeed, Mr. Goodrich had made me feel that my theories were fanciful. I left his office and went straight to the funeral of Joseph Crawford.

I was a bit early for the hour appointed, so I went to the office, with a dim idea of looking for further clues.

In the office I found Gregory Hall, looking decidedly disturbed.

"I can't find Mr. Crawford's will," he said, as he successively looked through one drawer after another.

"What!" I responded. "Has n't that been located already?"

"No; it's this way: I did n't see it here in this office, or in the New York office, so I assumed Mr. Randolph had it in his possession. But it seems he thought it was here, all the time. Only this morning we discovered our mutual error, and Mr. Randolph concluded it must be in Mr. Crawford's safety deposit box at the bank in New York. So Mr. Philip Crawford hurried through his administration papers—he is to be executor of the estate—and went in to get it from the bank. But he has just returned with the word that it was n't there. So we've no idea where it is."

"Oh, well," said I, "since he had n't yet made the new will he had in mind, everything belongs to Miss Lloyd."

"That's just the point," said Hall, his face taking on a despairing look. "If we don't find that will, she gets nothing!"

"How's that?" I said in amazement.

"Why, she's really not related to the Crawfords. She's a niece of Joseph Crawford's wife. So in the absence of a will his property will all go to his brother Philip, who is his legal heir."

"Oho!" I exclaimed. "This is a new development, indeed. But the will will turn up."

"Oh, yes, I'm sure of it," returned Hall, but his anxious face showed anything but confidence in his own words.

"But," I went on, greatly surprised at the situation, "did n't Philip Crawford object to his brother's giving all his fortune to Miss Lloyd?"

"It did n't matter if he did. Nobody could move Joseph Crawford's determination. And I fancy Philip did n't make any great disturbance about it. Of course, Mr. Joseph had a right to do as he chose with his own, and the will gave Philip a nice little sum, any way. Not much, compared to the whole fortune, but, still, a generous bequest."

"What does Mr. Randolph say?"

"He's completely baffled. He does n't know what to think."

"Can it have been stolen?"

"Why, no; who would steal it? I only fear he may have destroyed it because he expected to make a different one. In that case, Florence is penniless, save for such bounty as Philip Crawford chooses to bestow on her."

I did n't like the tone in which Hall said this. It was distinctly aggrieved, and gave the impression that Florence Lloyd, penniless, was of far less importance than Miss Lloyd, the heiress of her uncle's millions.

Without further words on the subject, I waited while Hall locked the door of the office, and then we went to the great drawing-room, where the funeral services were about to take place.

After the solemn and rather elaborate obsequies were over, a little assembly gathered in the library to hear the reading of the will.

As, until then, no one had known of the disappearance of the will, except the lawyer and the secretary, it came as a thunderbolt.

"I have no explanation to offer," said Mr. Randolph, looking greatly concerned, but free of all personal responsibility. "Mr. Crawford always kept the will in his own possession. When he came to see me, the last evening he was alive, in regard to making a new will, he did not bring the old one with him. We arranged to meet in his office the next morning to draw up the new instrument, when he doubtless expected to destroy the old one. He may have destroyed it on his return home that evening. I do not know. But so far it has not been found among his papers in either of his offices or in the bank. Of course it may appear, as the search, though thorough, has not yet been exhaustive. We will, therefore, hold the matter in abeyance a few days, hoping to find the missing document."

His hearers were variously affected by this news. Florence Lloyd was simply dazed. She could not seem to grasp a situation which so suddenly changed her prospects. For she well knew that in the event of no will being found Joseph Crawford's brother would be his rightful heir, and she legally entitled to nothing at all.

Philip Crawford sat with an utterly expressionless face. Quite able to control his emotion, if he felt any, he made no sign that he welcomed this possibility of a great fortune unexpectedly coming to him.

Lemuel Porter, who, with his wife, had remained because of their close friendship with the family, spoke out rather abruptly:

"Find it! Of course it must be found! It's absurd to think the man destroyed one will before the other was drawn."

"I agree with you," said Philip Crawford. "Joseph was very methodical in his habits, and, besides, I doubt if he would really have changed his will. I think he merely threatened it, to see if Florence persisted in keeping her engagement."

This was a generous speech on the part of Philip Crawford. To be sure, generosity of speech could n't affect the disposal of the estate. If no will were found, it must by law go to the brother, but none the less the hearty, whole-souled way in which he spoke of Miss Lloyd was greatly to his credit as a man.

"I think so, too," agreed Mr. Porter. "As you know, I called on Mr. Joseph Crawford during the—the last evening of his life."

The speaker paused, and indeed it must have been a sad remembrance that pictured itself to his mind.

"Did he then refer to the matter of the will?" asked Mr. Randolph, in gentle tones.

"He did. Little was said on the subject, but he told me that unless Florence consented to his wishes in the matter of her engagement to Mr. Hall, he should make a new will, leaving her only a small bequest."

"In what manner did you respond, Mr. Porter?"

"I did n't presume to advise him definitely, but I urged him not to be too hard on the girl, and, at any rate, not to make a new will until he had thought it over more deliberately."

"What did he then say?"

"Nothing of any definite import. He began talking of other matters, and the will was not again referred to. But I can't help thinking he had not destroyed it."

At this, Miss Lloyd seemed about to speak, but, glancing at Gregory Gall, she gave a little sigh, and remained silent.

"You know of nothing that can throw any light on the matter of the will, Mr. Hall?" asked Mr. Randolph.

"No, sir. Of course this whole situation is very embarrassing for me. I can only say that I have known for a long time the terms of Mr. Crawford's existing will; I have known of his threats of changing it; I have known of his attitude toward my engagement to his niece. But I never spoke to him on any of these subjects, nor he to me, though several times I have thought he was on the point of doing so. I have had access to most of his private papers, but of two or three small boxes he always retained the keys. I had no curiosity concerning the contents of these boxes, but I naturally assumed his will was in one of them. I have, however, opened these boxes since Mr. Crawford's death, in company with Mr. Randolph, and we found no will. Nor could we discover any in the New York office or in the bank. That is all I know of the matter."

Gregory Hall's demeanor was dignified and calm, his voice even and, indeed, cold. He was like a bystander, with no vital interest in the subject he talked about.

Knowing, as I did, that his interest *was* vital, I came to the conclusion that he was a man of unusual self-control, and an ability to mask his real feelings completely. Feeling that nothing more could be learned at present, I left the group in the library discussing the loss of the will, and went down to the district attorney's office.

He was, of course, surprised at my news, and agreed with me that it gave us new fields for conjecture.

"Now, we see," he said eagerly, "that the motive for the murder was the theft of the will."

"Not necessarily," I replied. "Mr. Crawford may have destroyed the will before he met his death."

"But that would leave no motive. No, the will supplies the motive. Now, you see, this frees Miss Lloyd from suspicion. She would have no reason to kill her uncle and then destroy or suppress a will in her own favor."

"That reasoning also frees Mr. Hall from suspicion," said I, reverting to my former theories.

"Yes, it does. We must look for the one who has benefited by the removal of the will. That, of course, would be the brother, Mr. Philip Crawford."

I looked at the attorney a moment, and then burst into laughter.

"My dear Mr. Goodrich," I said, "don't be absurd! I'm sure a man would n't shoot his own brother, but aside from that, why should Philip Crawford kill Joseph just at the moment he is about to make a new will in Philip's favor? Either the destruction of the old will or the drawing of the new would result in Philip's falling heir to the fortune. So he would hardly precipitate matters by a criminal act. And, too, if he had been keen about the money, he

could have urged his brother to disinherit Florence Lloyd, and Joseph would have willingly done so. He was on the very point of doing so, any way."

"That's true," said Mr. Goodrich, looking chagrined but unconvinced. "However, it frees Miss Lloyd from all doubts, by removing her motive. As you say, she would n't suppress a will in her favor, and thereby turn the fortune over to Philip. And, as you also said, this lets Gregory Hall out, too, though I never suspected him for a moment. But, of course, his interests and Miss Lloyd's are identical."

"Wait a moment," I said, for new thoughts were rapidly following one another through my brain. "Not so fast, Mr. District Attorney. The disappearance of the will does not remove 'motive' from the possibility of Miss Lloyd's complicity in this crime—or Mr. Hall's either."

"How so?"

"Because, if Florence Lloyd *thought* her uncle was in possession of that will, her motive was identically the same as if he *had* possessed it. Now, she certainly thought he had it, for her surprise at the news of its loss was as unfeigned as my own. And of course Hall thought the will was among Mr. Crawford's effects, for he has been searching constantly since the question was raised."

"But I thought that yesterday you were so sure of Miss Lloyd's innocence," objected Mr. Goodrich.

"I was," I said slowly, "and I think I am still. But in the light of absolute evidence I am only declaring that the non-appearance of that will in no way interferes with the motive Miss Lloyd must have had if she is in any way guilty. She knew, or thought she knew, that the will was there, in her favor. She knew her uncle intended to revoke it and make another in her disfavor. I do not accuse her—I'm not sure I suspect her—I only say she had motive and opportunity."

CHAPTER VI.

A CONFESSION

THE morning after the funeral I was granted an interview with Florence Lloyd.

Until I found myself in her presence, I had not actually realized how much I wanted this interview.

I was sure at once that what she said, her manner and her facial expression, must either blot out or strengthen whatever shreds of suspicion I held against her.

"Miss Lloyd," I began, "I am, as you know, a detective; and I am here in Sedgwick for the purpose of discovering the cowardly

assassin of your uncle. I assume that you wish to aid me in any way you can. Am I right in this?"

Instead of the unhesitating affirmative I had expected, the girl spoke irresolutely. "Yes," she said, "but I fear I cannot help you, as I know nothing about it."

The fact that this reply did not sound to me as a rebuff, for which it was doubtless intended, I can only account for by my growing appreciation of her wonderful beauty.

Instead of funereal black, Miss Lloyd was clad all in white, and her simple wool gown gave her a statuesque appearance, which, however, was contradicted by the pathetic weariness in her face and the sad droop of her lovely mouth. Her helplessness appealed to me, and, though she assumed an air of composure, I well knew it was only assumed, and that with some difficulty.

Resolving to make it as easy as possible for her, I did not ask her to repeat the main facts, which I already knew.

"Then, Miss Lloyd," I said, in response to her disclaimer, "if you cannot help me, perhaps I can help you. Let us talk the matter over quietly. It is as well that you should know that there are some doubts expressed as to the entire truth of the story you told at the inquest. I do not say this to frighten you," I added, as the poor girl clasped her hands and gave me a look of dumb alarm; "but, since it is so, I want to do all I can to set the matter right. Do you remember exactly all that took place, to your knowledge, on the night of your uncle's death?"

"Yes," she replied, looking more frightened still. It was evident that she knew more than she had yet revealed, but I almost forgot my inquiry, so absorbed was I in watching her lovely face. It was even more exquisite in its terrified pallor, than when the usual roses showed in her cheeks.

"Then," I said, "let us go over it. You heard your uncle go out at about eight o'clock and return about nine?"

"Yes, I heard the front door open and close both times."

"You and Mrs. Pierce being in the music-room, of course. Then, later, you heard a visitor enter, and again you heard him leave?"

"Yes—Mr. Porter."

"Did you know it was Mr. Porter, at the time he was here?"

"No; I think not. I did n't think at all who it might be. Uncle Joseph often had men to call in the evening."

"About what time did Mr. Porter leave?"

"A few minutes before ten. I heard Lambert say, 'Good-night, sir,' as he closed the door after him."

"And soon after, you and Mrs. Pierce went upstairs?"

"Yes; only a few minutes after."

"And, later, Mrs. Pierce came to your room?"

"Yes; about half-past ten, I should say; she came to get a book. She did n't stay two minutes."

"And after that, you went down-stairs again to speak to your uncle?"

For the merest instant, Miss Lloyd's eyes closed, and she swayed as if about to faint, but she regained her composure at once, and answered with some asperity:

"I did not. I have told you that I did not leave my room again that night."

Her dark eyes blazed, her cheeks flushed, and though her full lower lip quivered it was with anger now, not fear.

As I watched her, I wondered how I could have thought her more beautiful when pale. Surely with this glowing color she was at her glorious best.

"Then when did you drop the two rose petals there?" I went on, calmly enough, though my own heart was beating fast.

"I did not drop them. They were left there by some intruder."

"But, Miss Lloyd," and I observed her closely, "the petals were from a rose such as those Mr. Hall sent you that evening. The florist assures me there were no more such blossoms in West Sedgwick at that time. The fallen petals, then, were from one of your own roses, or—"

"Or?" asked Miss Lloyd, her hands pressed against the laces at her throbbing bosom. "Or?"

"Or," I went on, "from a rose worn by some one who had come out from New York on a late train."

She gave a gasp, and, leaning back in her chair, she closed her eyes, as if spent with a useless struggle.

"Wait a moment," she said, putting out her hand with an imploring gesture. "Wait a moment. Let me think. I will tell you all, but—wait—"

With her eyes still closed, she lay back against the satin chair cushion, and I gazed at her, fascinated.

I knew it! Then and there the knowledge came to me! Not her guilt, not her innocence. The crime seemed far away then, but I knew like a flash that I loved this girl, this Florence Lloyd, and should never love any one else. It mattered not that she was betrothed to another man; the love that suddenly sprang to life in my heart was such pure devotion that it asked no return. Guilty or innocent, I loved her. Guilty or innocent, I would clear her; and if the desire of her heart were toward another, she should never know or suspect my adoration for her.

I gazed at her lovely face, knowing that when her eyes opened

I must discreetly turn my glance aside, but blessing every instant of opportunity thus given me.

At last she spoke. The dark lashes slowly raised, and she seemed more gentle than at first.

"I must tell you," she said. "I see I must. But don't repeat it, unless it is necessary. Detectives have to know things, but they don't have to tell them, do they?"

"We never repeat confidences, Miss Lloyd," I replied, "except when necessary to further the cause of right and justice."

"Truly? Is that so?"

She brightened up so much that I began to hope she had only some trifling matter to tell of.

"Well, then," she went on, "I will tell you, for I know it need not be repeated in the furtherance of justice. I did go down to my uncle's office that night, after Mrs. Pierce had been to my room; and it was I—it must have been I—who dropped those rose petals."

"And left the bag," I suggested.

"No," she said, and her face looked perplexed, but not confused. "No, the bag is not mine, and I did not leave it there. I know nothing of it, absolutely nothing. But I did go to the office at about eleven o'clock. I had a talk with my uncle, and I left him there a half-hour later—alive and well as when I went in."

"Was your conversation about your engagement?"

"Yes."

"Was it amicable?"

"No, it was not! Uncle Joseph was more angry than I had ever before seen him. He declared he intended to make a new will the next morning, which would provide only a small income for me. He said this was not revenge or punishment for my loyalty to Mr. Hall, but—but—"

"But what?" I urged gently.

"It scarcely seems loyal to Mr. Hall for me to say it," she returned, and the tears were in her eyes. "But this is all confidential. Well, Uncle Joseph said that Gregory only wanted to marry me for my fortune, and that the new will would prove this. Of course I denied that Mr. Hall was so mercenary, and then we had a good deal of an altercation. But it was not very different from many discussions we have had on the same subject, only Uncle was more decided, and said he had asked Mr. Randolph to come the next morning and draw up the new will. I left him still angry—he would n't even say good-night to me—and now I blame myself for not being more gentle, and trying harder to make peace. But it annoyed me to have him call Gregory mercenary—"

"Because you knew it was true," I said quietly.

She turned white to the very lips. "You are unnecessarily impertinent," she said.

"I am," I agreed. "I beg your pardon." But I had discovered that she did realize her lover's true nature.

"And then you went to your room, *and stayed there?*" I went on, with a meaning emphasis on the last clause.

"Yes," she said; "and so, you see, what I have told you casts no light on the mystery. I only told you so as to explain the bits of the yellow rose. I feared, from what you said, that Mr. Hall's name might possibly be brought into discussion."

"Why, he was not in West Sedgwick that night," I said.

"Where was he?" she countered quickly.

"I don't know. He refuses to tell. Of course you must see that his absolute refusal to tell where he was that night is, to say the least, an unwise proceeding."

"He won't even tell me where he was," she said, sighing. "But it does n't matter. He was n't here."

"That's just it," I rejoined. "If he was not here, it would be far better for him to tell where he really was. For the refusal to tell raises a question that will not be downed, except by an alibi. I don't want to be cruel, Miss Lloyd, but I must make you see that as the inquiry proceeds, the actions of both Mr. Hall and yourself will be subjected to very close scrutiny, and though perhaps undue attention will be paid to trifles, yet the trifles must be explained."

I was so sorry for the girl, that, in my effort not to divulge my too great sympathy, I probably used a sterner tone than I realized.

At any rate, I had wakened her at last to a sense of the danger that threatened her and her lover, and now, if she would let me, I would do all in my power to save them both. But I must know all she could tell me.

"When did Mr. Hall leave you?" I asked.

"You mean the day—last Tuesday?"

"Yes?"

"He left here about half-past five. He had been in the office with Uncle Joseph all the afternoon, and at five o'clock he came in here for a cup of tea with me. He almost always comes in at tea-time. Then he left about half-past five, saying he was going to New York on the six o'clock train."

"For what purpose?"

"I never ask him questions like that. I know he was to attend to some business for Uncle the next day, but I never ask him what he does evenings when he is in the city, or at any time when he is not with me."

"But surely one might ask such questions of the man to whom she is betrothed."

Miss Lloyd again put on that little air of hauteur which always effectually stopped my "impertinence."

"It is not my habit," she said. "What Gregory wishes me to know he tells me of his own accord."

I began on a new tack.

"Miss Lloyd, why did you tell an untruth, and say you did not come down-stairs again, after going up at ten o'clock?"

Her hauteur disappeared. A frightened, appealing look came into her eyes, and she looked to me like a lovely child afraid of unseen dangers.

"I was afraid," she confessed. "Yes, truly, I was afraid that they would think I had something to do with the—with Uncle Joseph's death. And as I did n't think it could do any good to tell of my little visit to him, I just said I did n't come down. Oh, I know it was a lie—I know it was wicked—but I was so frightened, and it was such an easy way out of it, just to deny it."

"And why have you confessed it to me now?"

Her eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"I told you why," she said: "so you would know where the rose-leaves came from, and not suspect Gregory."

"Do you suspect him?"

"N-no, of course not. But others might."

It is impossible to describe the dismay that smote my heart at the hesitation of this answer. It was more than hesitation. It was a conflict of unspoken impulses, and the words, when they were uttered, seemed to carry hidden meanings, and to my mind they carried the worst and most sinister meaning conceivable.

To me, it seemed to point unmistakably to collusion between Florence Lloyd, whom I already loved, and Gregory Hall, whom I already distrusted and disliked. Guilty collusion between these two would explain everything. Theirs the motive, theirs the opportunity, their the denials and false witnessing. The gold bag, as yet, remained unexplained, but the yellow rose petals and the late newspaper could be accounted for if Hall had come out on the midnight train, and Florence had helped him to enter and leave the house unseen.

Bah! it was impossible. And, any way, the gold bag remained as proof against this horrid theory. I would pin my faith to the gold bag, and through its presence in the room, I would defy suspicions of the two people I had resolved to protect.

"What do you think about the gold bag?" I asked.

"I don't know what to think. I hate to accuse Uncle Joseph of such a thing, but it seems as if some woman friend of his must have

come to the office after I left. The long French windows were open—it was a warm night, you know—and any one could have come and gone unseen."

"The bag was n't there when you were there?"

"I'm sure it was not! That is, not in sight, and Uncle Joseph was not the sort of man to have such a thing put away in his desk as a souvenir, or for any other reason."

"Did you see your uncle's will while you were there?"

"No; he talked about it, but did not show it to me."

"Did he talk about it as if it were still in his possession?"

"Why, yes; I think so. That is, he said he would make a new one unless I gave up Gregory. That implied that the old one was still in existence, though he did n't exactly say so."

"Miss Lloyd, this is important evidence. I must tell you that I shall be obliged to repeat much of it to the district attorney. It seems to me to prove that your uncle did not himself destroy the will."

"He might have done so after I left him."

"I can't think it, for it is not in scraps in the waste-basket, nor are there any paper-ashes in the grate."

"Well, then," she rejoined, "if he did n't destroy it, it may yet be found."

"You wish that very much?" I said, almost involuntarily.

"Oh, I do!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "Not so much for myself as—"

She paused, and I finished the sentence for her: "For Mr. Hall."

She looked angry again, but said nothing.

"Well, Miss Lloyd," I said, as I rose to go, "I am going to do everything in my power in your behalf, and in behalf of Mr. Hall. But I tell you frankly, unless you will both tell me the truth, and the whole truth, you will only defeat my efforts, and work your own undoing."

I had to look away from her as I said this, for I could not look on that sweet face and say anything even seemingly harsh or dictatorial.

Her lip quivered. "I will do my best," she said tremblingly. "I will try to make Mr. Hall tell where he was that night. I will see you again after I have talked with him."

More collusion! I said good-by rather curtly, I fear, and went quickly away from that perilous presence.

Truly, a nice detective, I! Bowled over by a beautiful face, I was unable to think clearly, to judge logically, or to work honestly!

Well, I would go home and think it out by myself. Away from her influence, I surely would regain my cool-headed methods of thought.

When I reached the inn, I found Mr. Lemuel Porter there, waiting for me.

"How do you do, Mr. Burroughs?" he said pleasantly. "Have you time for a half-hour's chat?"

It was just what I wanted. A talk with this clear-thinking man would help me, indeed, and I determined to get his opinions, even as I was ready to give him mine.

"Well, what do you think about it all?" I inquired, after we were comfortably settled at a small table on the shaded veranda, which was a popular gathering-place at this hour. But in our corner we were in no danger of listening ears, and I awaited his reply with interest.

His eyes smiled a little, as he said:

"You know the old story of the man who said he would n't hire a dog and then do his own barking. Well, though I have n't 'hired' you, I would be quite ready to pay your honorarium if you can ferret out our West Sedgwick mystery. And so, as you are the detective in charge of the case, I ask you, what do *you* think about it all?"

But I was pretty thoroughly on my guard now.

"I think," I began, "that much hinges on the ownership of that gold bag."

"And you do not think it is Miss Lloyd's?"

"I do not."

"It need not incriminate her, if it were hers," said Mr. Porter, meditatively knocking the ash from his cigar. "She might have left it in the office at any time previous to the day of the crime. Women are always leaving such things about. I confess it does not seem to me important."

"Was it on Mr. Crawford's desk when you were there?" I asked suddenly.

He looked up at me quickly, and again that half-smile came into his eyes.

"Am I to be questioned?" he said. "Well, I've no objections, I'm sure. No, I do not think it was there when I called on Mr. Crawford that evening. But I could n't swear to this, for I am not an observant man, and the thing might have lain there in front of me and never caught my eye. If I had noticed it, of course I should have thought it was Florence's."

"But you don't think so now, do you?"

"No; I can't say I think so. And yet I can imagine a girl untruthfully denying ownership under such circumstances."

I started at this. For had n't Miss Lloyd untruthfully denied coming down-stairs to talk to her uncle?

"But," went on Mr. Porter, "if the bag is not Florence's, then I can think of but one explanation for its presence there."

"A lady visitor, late at night," I said slowly.

"Yes," was the grave reply; "and though such an occurrence might have been an innocent one, yet, taken in connection with the crime, there is a dreadful possibility."

"Granting this," I suggested, "we ought to be able to trace the owner of the bag."

"Not likely. If the owner of that bag—a woman, presumably—is the slayer of Joseph Crawford, and made her escape from the scene undiscovered, she is not likely to stay around where she may be found. And the bag itself, and its contents, are hopelessly un-individual."

"They are that," I agreed. "Not a thing in it that might n't be in any woman's bag in this country. To me, that cleaner's advertisement means nothing in connection with Miss Lloyd."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Mr. Burroughs. I confess I have had a half-fear that your suspicions had a trend in Florence's direction, and I assure you, sir, that girl is incapable of the slightest impulse toward crime."

"I'm sure of that," I said heartily, my blood bounding in my veins at an opportunity to speak in defense of the woman I loved. "But how if her impulses were directed, or even coerced, by another?"

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"Oh, nothing. But sometimes the best and sweetest women will act against their own good impulses for those they love."

"I cannot pretend to misunderstand you," said Mr. Porter. "But you are wrong. If the one you have in mind—I will say no name—was in any way guiltily implicated, it was without the knowledge or connivance of Florence Lloyd. But, man, the idea is absurd. The individual in question has a perfect alibi."

"He refuses to give it."

"Refuses the details, perhaps. And he has a right to, since they concern no one but himself. No, my friend, you know the French rule; well, follow that, and search for the lady with the gold-mesh bag."

"The lady without it, at present," I said, with an apologetic smile for my rather grim jest.

"Yes; and that's the difficulty. As she has n't the bag, we can't discover her. So as a clue it is worthless."

"It seems to be," I agreed.

But after Mr. Porter's departure, I studied long over the gold-mesh bag and its contents. I did n't need to see them; I knew them by heart. To me, the gloves, the handkerchief, the silver coins, gave

no inkling of anything but gloves, handkerchiefs, and coins in the abstract.

And yet I was perfectly certain that if Fleming Stone once set his eyes on that collection of clues, he would read the description of the lady as easily as from so much print.

And so I determined to send for him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OWNER OF THE BAG

THAT evening I went to see Philip Crawford. As one of the executors of his late brother's estate, and as probable heir to the same, he was an important personage just now.

He seemed glad to see me, and glad to discuss ways and means of running down the assassin. Like Mr. Porter, he attached little importance to the gold bag.

"I can't help thinking it belongs to Florence," he said. "I know the girl so well, and I know that her horrified fear of being in any way connected with the tragedy might easily lead her to disown her own property, thinking the occasion justified the untruth. That girl has no more guilty knowledge of Joseph's death than I have, and that is absolutely none. I tell you frankly, Mr. Burroughs, I haven't even a glimmer of a suspicion of any one. I can't think of an enemy my brother had; he was the most easy-going of men. I never knew him to quarrel with anybody. So I trust that you, with your detective talent, can at least find a clue to lead us in the right direction."

"You don't admit the gold bag as a clue, then?" I asked.

"Nonsense! No! If that were a clue, it would point to some woman who came secretly at night, to visit Joseph. My brother was not that sort of man, sir. He had no feminine acquaintances that were unknown to his relatives."

"That is, you suppose so."

"I know it! We have been brothers for sixty years or more, and whatever Joseph's faults, they did not lie in that direction. No, sir; if that bag is not Florence's, then there is some other rational and commonplace explanation of its presence there."

"Where is the revolver?" I said, picturing the scene in imagination.

Philip Crawford started as if caught unawares.

"How do I know?" he cried, almost angrily. "I tell you, I have no suspicions. I wish I had! I desire, above all things, to bring my brother's murderer to justice. But I don't know where to look. If the weapon were not missing, I should think it a suicide."

"The doctor declares it could not have been suicide, even if the

weapon had been found near him. This they learned from the position of his arms and head."

"Yes, yes; I know it. It was, without doubt, murder. But who—who would have a motive?"

"They say," I observed, "motives for murder are usually love, revenge, or money."

"There is no question of love or revenge in this instance. And as for money, as I am the one who has profited financially, suspicion should rest on me."

"Absurd," I said.

"Yes, it is absurd," he went on, "for had I desired Joseph's fortune, I need not have killed him to acquire it. He told me the day before he died that he intended to disinherit Florence, and make me his heir, unless she broke with that secretary of his. I tried to dissuade him from this step, for we are not a mercenary lot, we Crawfords, and I thought I had made him reconsider his decision. Now, as it turns out, he persisted in his resolve, and was only prevented from carrying it out by this midnight assassin. We must find that villain, Mr. Burroughs! Do not consider expense; do anything you can to track him down."

"Then, Mr. Crawford," said I, "if you do not mind the outlay, I advise that we send for Fleming Stone. He is a detective of extraordinary powers, and I am quite willing to surrender the case to him."

Philip Crawford eyed me keenly.

"You give up easily, young man," he said banteringly.

"I know it seems so," I replied, "but I have my reasons. One is, that Fleming Stone makes important deductions from seemingly unimportant clues; and he holds that unless these clues are followed immediately, they are lost sight of and great opportunities are gone."

"H'm," mused Philip Crawford, stroking his strong, square chin. "I don't care much for these spectacular detectives. Your man, I suppose, would glance at the gold bag, and at once announce the age, sex, and previous condition of servitude of its owner."

"Just what I have thought, Mr. Crawford. I'm sure he could do just that."

"And that's all the good it would do! That bag does n't belong to the criminal."

"How do you know?"

"By common sense. No woman came to the house in the dead of night and shot my brother, and then departed, taking her revolver with her. And again, granting a woman did have nerve and strength enough to do that, such a woman is not going off leaving her gold bag behind her as evidence!"

This speech didn't affect me much. It was pure conjecture. Women are uncertain creatures, at best; and a woman capable of murder would be equally capable of losing her head afterward, and leaving circumstantial evidence behind her.

I was sorry Mr. Crawford did n't seem to take to the notion of sending for Stone. I was n't weakening in the case so far as my confidence in my own ability was concerned; but I could see no direction to look except toward Florence Lloyd or Gregory Hall, or both. And so I was ready to give up.

"What do you think of Gregory Hall?" I said suddenly.

"As a man or as a suspect?" inquired Mr. Crawford.

"Both."

"Well, as a man, I think he's about the average, ordinary young American, of the secretary type. He has little real ambition, but he has had a good berth with Joseph, and he has worked fairly hard to keep it. As a suspect, the notion is absurd. He was n't even in West Sedgwick."

"How do you know?"

"Because he went away at six that evening, and was in New York until nearly noon the next day."

"How do you know?"

Philip Crawford stared at me.

"He says so," I went on; "but no one can prove his statement. He refuses to say where he was in New York, or what he did. Now, merely as a supposition, why could n't he have come out here—say on the midnight train—called on Mr. Joseph Crawford, and returned to New York before daylight?"

"Absurd! Why, he had no motive for killing Joseph."

"He had the same motive Florence would have. He knew of Mr. Crawford's objection to their union, and he knew of his threat to change his will. Mr. Hall is not blind to the advantages of a fortune."

"Right you are, there! In fact, I always felt he was marrying Florence for her money. I had no real reason to think this, but somehow he gave me that impression."

"Me, too. Moreover, I found a late extra of a New York paper in Mr. Crawford's office. This was n't on sale until about half past eleven that night, so whoever left it there *must* have come out from the city on that midnight train, or later."

A change came over Philip Crawford's face. Apparently he was brought to see the whole matter in a new light.

"What? What's that?" he cried excitedly, grasping his chair-arms and half rising. "A late newspaper! An extra!"

"Yes; the liner accident, you know."

"But—but—Gregory Hall! Why, man, you're crazy. Hall is a good fellow. Not remarkably clever, perhaps, and a fortune-hunter, maybe, but not—surely not a murderer!"

"Don't take it so hard, Mr. Crawford," I broke in. "Probably Mr. Hall is innocent. But the late paper must have been left there by some one, after, say, one o'clock."

"This is awful! This is terrible!" groaned the poor man, and I could n't help wondering if he had some other evidence against Hall, that this seemed to corroborate.

Then, by an effort, he recovered himself, and began to talk in more normal tones.

"Now, don't let this new idea run away with you, Mr. Burroughs," he said. "If Hall had an interview with my brother that night, he would have learned from him that he intended to make a new will, but had n't yet done so."

"Exactly; and that would constitute a motive for putting Mr. Crawford out of the way before he could accomplish his purpose."

"But Joseph had already destroyed the will that favored Florence."

"We don't know that," I responded gravely. "And, any way, if he had done so, Mr. Hall did n't know it. This leaves his motive unchanged."

"But the gold bag," said Mr. Crawford, apparently to get away from the subject of Gregory Hall.

"If, as you say," I began, "that is Florence's bag—"

I could n't go on. A strange sense of duty had forced those words from me, but I could say no more.

Fleming Stone might take the case if they wanted him to; or they might get some one else. But I could not go on, when the only clues discoverable pointed in a way I dared not look.

Philip Crawford was ghastly white now. His face was working, and he breathed quickly.

"Nonsense, Dad!" cried a strong, young voice, and his son, Philip, Jr., bounded into the room and grasped his father's hands. "I overheard a few of your last words, and you two are on the wrong track. Florrie's no more mixed up in that horrible business than I am. Neither is Hall. He's a fool chap, but no villain. I heard what you said about the late newspaper, but lots of people come out on that midnight train. You may as well suspect some peaceable citizen coming home from the theatre, as to pick out poor Hall, without a scrap of evidence to point to him."

I was relieved beyond all words at the hearty assurance of the boy, and I plucked up new courage. Apprehension had made me faint-hearted, but if he could show such flawless confidence in Florence and her betrothed, surely I could do as much.

"Good for you, Phil!" I cried, shaking his hand. "You've cheered me up a lot. I'll take a fresh start, and surely we'll find out something. But I'd like to send for Stone."

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," said Mr. Crawford. "Phil's right; there's no possibility of Florrie or Hall in the matter. Leave the gold bag, the newspapers, and the yellow posies out of consideration, and go to work in some sensible way."

"How about Mr. Joseph's finances?" I asked. "Are they in satisfactory shape?"

"Never finer," said Philip Crawford. "Joseph was a very rich man, and all due to his own clever and careful investments. A bit of a speculator, but always on the right side of the market. Why, he fairly had a corner in X. Y. stock. Just that deal—and it will go through in a few days—means a fortune in itself. I shall settle that on Florence."

"Then you think the will will never be found?" I said.

Mr. Crawford looked a little ashamed, as well he might, but he only said:

"If it is, no one will be more glad than I, to see Florrie reinstated in her own right. If no will turns up, Joe's estate is legally mine, but I shall see that Florence is amply provided for."

He spoke with a proud dignity, and I was rather sorry I had caught him up so sharply.

I went back to the inn, and, after vainly racking my brain over it all for a time, I turned in, but to a miserably broken night's rest.

The next morning I dawdled about, uncertain whether to send for Fleming Stone or not. I had decided to go and ask the district attorney's advice on this point, when a telephone call from Florence Lloyd asked me to come to her at once.

Only too glad to obey this summons, I went directly to the Crawford house, wondering if any new evidence had been brought to light.

Lambert opened the door for me, and ushered me into the library, where Florence was receiving a lady caller.

"Mrs. Cunningham," said Florence, as I entered, "may I present Mr. Burroughs—Mr. Herbert Burroughs, the well-known detective. I sent for you," she added, turning to me, "because Mrs. Cunningham has an important story to tell, and I thought you ought to hear it at once."

I was a little embarrassed at the way Florence introduced me—almost as if I were as famous as Fleming Stone, himself—but I bowed politely to the stranger, and awaited her disclosures.

Mrs. Cunningham was one of those pretty, frivolous-looking women, with appealing blue eyes, and a manner half-childish, half-apologetic.

"I know I've done very wrong," she began, with a nervous little flutter of her pretty hands; "but I'm ready now to 'fess up, as the children say."

She looked at me, so sure of an answering smile, that I gave it, and said:

"Let us hear your confession, Mrs. Cunningham; I doubt if it's a very dreadful one."

"Well, you see," she went on, "that gold bag is mine."

"Yours!" I exclaimed. "How did it get here?"

"I've no idea," she replied, and I could see that her shallow nature fairly exulted in the sensation she was creating. "I went to New York that night, to the theatre, and I carried my gold bag, and I left it in the train when I got out at the station."

"West Sedgwick?" I asked.

"No; I live at Marathon Park, the next station to this."

"Next on the way to New York?"

"Yes. And when I got out of the train—I was with my husband and some other people—we had been having a little theatre party—I missed it. But I did n't tell Jack, because I knew he'd scold me for being so careless. I thought I'd get it back from the Lost and Found Department, and then, the very next day, I read in the paper about the—the—awful accident, and it told about a gold bag being found here."

"You recognized it as yours?"

"Of course; for the paper described everything in it—even to the cleaner's advertisement that I'd just cut out that very day."

"Why did n't you come and claim it at once?"

"Oh, Mr. Burroughs, you must know why I did n't! Why, I was scared 'most to death to read the accounts of the terrible affair; and to mix in it, myself—ugh! I could n't dream of anything so horrible."

"Then why are you here now?"

It was absurd, but I had a desire to shake the silly little bundle of femininity who told this really important story, with the twitters and simpers of a silly school-girl.

"Well, I kept it secret as long as I could, but yesterday Jack saw that I had something on my mind. I could n't fool him any longer."

"As to your having a mind!" I said to myself, but I made no comment aloud.

"So I told him all about it, and he said I must come at once and tell Miss Lloyd, because, you see, they thought it was her bag all the time."

"Yes," I said gravely; "it would have been better if you had

come at first, with your story. Have you any one to substantiate it, or any proofs that it is the truth?"

The blue eyes regarded me with an injured expression. Then she brightened again.

"Oh, yes, I can 'prove property'; that's what you mean, is n't it? I can tell you which glove-finger is ripped, and just how much money is in the bag, and—and here's a handkerchief exactly like the one I carried that night. Jack said if I told you all these things, you'd know it's my bag, and not Miss Lloyd's."

"Yes; I've no doubt it's your bag. Now, how did it get in Mr. Crawford's office?"

"Ah, how did it?" The laughing face was sober now and she seemed appalled at the question. "Jack says some one must have found it in the car-seat where I left it, and he"—she lowered her voice—"he must be the—"

"The murderer," I supplied calmly. "It does look that way. You have witnesses, I suppose, who saw you in that train?"

"Mercy, yes! Lots of them. The train reaches Marathon Park at 12:50, and is due here at one o'clock. Ever so many people got out at our station. There were six in our own party, and others besides. And the conductor knows me, and everybody knows Jack. He's Mr. John Le Roy Cunningham."

It was impossible to doubt all this. Further corroboration it might be well to get, but there was not the slightest question in my mind as to the little lady's truthfulness.

"I thank you, Mrs. Cunningham," I said, "for coming to us with your story. You may not be able to get your bag to-day, but I assure you it will be sent to you as soon as a few inquiries can be made. These are merely for the sake of formalities, for, as you say, your fellow townspeople can certify to your presence on the train, and your leaving it at the Marathon Park station."

"Yes," she replied; "and"—she handed me a paper—"there's my husband's address, and his lawyer's address, and the addresses of all the people that were in our party that night. Jack said you might like to have the list. He would have come himself to-day, only he's fearfully busy. And I said I did n't mind coming alone, just to see Miss Lloyd. I would n't have gone to a jury meeting, though. And I'm in no hurry for the bag. In fact, I don't care much if I never get it. It was n't the value of the thing that made me come at all, but the fear that my bag might make trouble for Miss Lloyd. Jack said it might. I don't see how, myself, but I'm a foolish little thing, with no head for business matters." She shook her head, and gurgled an absurd little laugh, and then, after a loquacious leave-taking, she went away.

"Well?" I said to Florence, and then, "Well?" Florence said to me.

It was astonishing how rapidly our acquaintance had progressed. Already we had laid aside all formality of speech and manner, and if the girl had not really discovered my mental attitude toward her, at least I think she must have suspected it.

"Of course," I began, "I knew it was n't your bag, because you said it was n't. But I did incline a little to the 'woman visitor' theory, and now that is destroyed. I think we must conclude that the bag was brought here by the person who found it on that midnight train."

"Why did n't that person turn it over to the conductor?" she said, more as if thinking to herself than speaking to me.

"Yes, why, indeed?" I echoed. "And if he brought it here, and committed a criminal act, why go away and leave it here?"

I think it was at the same moment that the minds of both of us turned to Gregory Hall. Her eyes fell, and as for me, I was nearly stunned with the thoughts that came rushing to my brain.

If the late newspaper had seemed to point to Hall's coming out on that late train, how much more so this bag, which had been left on that very train!

We were silent for a time, and then, lifting her sweet eyes bravely to mine, Florence said:

"I have something to tell you."

"Yes," I replied, crushing down the longing to take her in my arms and let her tell it there.

"Mr. Hall had a talk with me this morning. He says that he and the others have searched everywhere possible for the will, and it cannot be found. He says Uncle Joseph must have destroyed it, and that it is practically settled that Uncle Philip is the legal heir. Of course, Mr. Philip Crawford is n't my uncle, but I have always called him that, and Phil and I have been just like cousins."

"What else did Mr. Hall say?" I asked, for I divined that the difficult part of her recital was yet to come.

"He said," she went on, with a rising color, "that he wished me to break our engagement."

I will do myself the justice to say that although my first uncontrollable thought was one of pure joy at this revelation, yet it was instantly followed by sympathy and consideration for her.

"Why?" I asked in a voice that I tried to keep from being hard.

"He says," she continued, with a note of weariness in her voice, "that he is not a rich man, and cannot give me the comforts and luxuries to which I have been accustomed, and that therefore it is only right for him to release me."

"Of course you did n't accept his generous sacrifice," I said; and my own hopes ran riot as I listened for her answer.

"I told him I was willing to share poverty with him," she said, with a quiet dignity, as if telling an impersonal tale, "but he insisted that the engagement should be broken."

"And is it?" I asked eagerly, almost breathlessly.

She gave me that look which always rebuked me—always put me back in my place—but which, it seemed to me, was a little less severe than ever before. "It's left undecided for a day or two," she said. Then she added hurriedly:

"I must see if he needs me. Do you suppose this story of Mrs. Cunningham's will in any way—well, affect him?"

"It may," I replied truthfully. "At any rate, he must be made to tell where he was and what he was doing Tuesday night. You have no idea, have you?"

Florence hesitated a moment, looked at me in a way I could not fathom, and then, but only after a little choking sound in her throat, she said:

"No, I have no idea."

It was impossible to believe her. No one would show such emotion, such difficulty of speech, if telling a simple truth. Yet when I looked in her troubled eyes, and read there anxiety, uncertainty, and misery, I only loved her more than ever. Truly it was time for me to give up this case. Whatever turn it took, I was no fit person to handle clues or evidence which filled me with deadly fear lest they turn against the one I loved.

And yet that one, already suspected by many, had been proved to have both motive and opportunity.

And I, I who loved her, knew that, in some instances, at least, she had been untruthful.

Yes, it was high time for me to give this case into other hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN

Of course I went straight to the district attorney's office to report my new information. I found Mr. Porter there, and both men welcomed me as a possible bringer of fresh news. When I said that I did know of new developments, Mr. Porter half rose from his chair.

"I dare say I've no business here," he said; "but you know the deep interest I take in this whole matter. Joseph Crawford was my lifelong friend and near neighbor, and if I can be in any way instrumental in freeing Florence from this web of suspicion—"

I turned on him angrily, and interrupted him by saying:

"Excuse me, Mr. Porter; no one has as yet voiced a suspicion against Miss Lloyd. For you to put such a thought into words, is starting a mine of trouble."

The older man looked at me indulgently, and I think his shrewd perceptions told him at once that I was more interested in Miss Lloyd than a mere detective need be.

"You are right," he said; "but I considered this a confidential session."

"It is," broke in Mr. Goodrich, "and if you will stay, Mr. Porter, I shall be glad to have you listen to whatever Mr. Burroughs has to tell us, and then give us the benefit of your advice."

I practically echoed the district attorney's words, for I knew Lemuel Porter to be a clear-headed and well-balanced business man, and his opinions well worth having.

So it was to two very interested hearers that I related first the story of Florence's coming down-stairs at eleven o'clock on the fatal night, for a final endeavor to gain her uncle's consent to her betrothal.

"Then it was her bag!" exclaimed Mr. Porter. "I thought so all the time."

I said nothing at the moment and listened for Mr. Goodrich's comment.

"To my mind," said the district attorney slowly, "this story, told now by Miss Lloyd, is in her favor. If the girl were guilty, or had any guilty knowledge of the crime, she would not have told of this matter at all. It was not forced from her; she told it voluntarily, and I, for one, believe it."

"She told it," said I, "because she wished to take the responsibility of the fallen rose petals upon herself. Since we are speaking plainly, I may assure you, gentlemen, that she told of her later visit to the office because I hinted to her that the yellow leaves might implicate Gregory Hall."

"Then," said Mr. Goodrich triumphantly, "she herself suspects Mr. Hall, which proves that she is innocent."

"It does n't prove her innocent of collusion," observed Mr. Porter.

"Nor does it prove that she suspects Mr. Hall," I added. "It merely shows that she fears others may suspect him."

"It is very complicated," sighed the district attorney.

"It is," I agreed, "and that is why I wish to send for the famous detective, Fleming Stone."

"Stone! Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Goodrich. "I have every confidence in your skill, Mr. Burroughs; I would not insult you by calling in another detective."

"Surely not," agreed Mr. Porter. "If you need help, Mr. Bur-

roughs, confer with our local man, Mr. Parmalee. He's a pretty clever chap, and I don't know why you two don't work more together."

"Leaving that subject for the moment," said I, "please listen while I tell you another bit of information."

Then, with scarcely a word of interruption from my hearers, I told them of the advent of Mrs. Cunningham, and her claim to the gold bag.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Porter, as I concluded the narrative. "Well! Of all things! Well, I *am* amazed! Why, this gives a wide scope of possibilities. Scores of our people come out on that theatre train every night."

"But not scores of people who would have a motive for putting Joseph Crawford out of the way," said Mr. Goodrich, who sat perplexedly frowning.

Then, by way of a trump card, I told them of the "extra" edition of the evening paper I had found in the office.

The district attorney stared at me, but still sat frowning and silent.

But Mr. Porter expressed his wonderment.

"How it all fits in!" he cried. "The bag, known to be from that late train; the paper, known to have been bought late in New York! Burroughs, you're a wonder! Indeed, we don't want any Fleming Stone, when you can do such clever sleuthing as this."

I stared at him. Nothing I had done seemed to me "clever sleuthing," nor did my simple discoveries seem to me of any real importance.

"I don't like it," said Mr. Goodrich, at last. "Everything so far known, both early and late information, seems to me to point to Gregory Hall and Florence Lloyd in collusion."

"But you said," I interrupted, "that Miss Lloyd's confession that she did go down-stairs late at night was in her favor."

"I said that before I knew about this bag story. Now I think the case is altered, and the two who had real motive are undoubtedly the suspects."

"But they had no motive," said Mr. Porter, "since Florence does n't inherit the fortune."

"But they thought they did," explained the district attorney, "and so the motive was just as strong. Mr. Burroughs, I wish you would confer with Mr. Parmalee, and both of you set to work on the suggestions I have advanced. It is a painful outlook, to be sure, but justice is inexorable. You agree with me, Mr. Porter?"

Mr. Porter started, as if he, too, had been in a brown study.

"I do and I don't," he said. "Personally, I think both those young people are innocent, but if I am correct, no harm will be done by a further investigation of their movements on Tuesday night."

I think Mr. Hall ought to tell where he was that night, if only in his own self-defense. If he proves he was in New York, and did not come out here, it will not only clear him, but also Florence. For I think no one suspects her of anything more than collusion with him."

"Very well," I said, after listening to a little further discussion, which was really repetition. "Then, here's my ultimatum. I will make some further investigations and inquiries regarding the two people in question, but only on condition that I work alone. I am not in sympathy with Mr. Parmalee or his methods, and, though I bear him no ill-will, I must conduct my search by myself."

"Oh, I don't care about that," said Mr. Goodrich. "I only thought he could help you. If not, then go on in your own way. But I don't think you need call in a man whom *you* consider your superior."

His smile and his words were both flattering, but my heart sank as I realized that I had promised to hunt down Florence Lloyd.

It was then that I admitted to myself the true state of my mind. I felt sure Florence was innocent, but I knew appearances were strongly against her, and I feared I should bungle the case because of the very intensity of my desire not to. And I thought that Fleming Stone, in spite of evidence, would be able to prove what I felt was the truth, that Florence was guiltless of all knowledge of or complicity in her uncle's death.

However, I had promised to go on with the quest, and I urged myself on, with the hope that further developments might clear Florence, even if they more deeply implicated Gregory Hall.

I went back to the inn, and spent some time in thinking over the matter, and methodically recording my conclusions. And, as I thought, I became more and more convinced that, whether Florence connived or not, Hall was the villain, and that he had actually slain his employer because he had threatened to disinherit his niece.

Perhaps when Hall came to the office, late that night, Mr. Crawford was already engaged in drawing up the new will, and in order to purloin this Hall had killed him, not knowing that the other will was already destroyed. And destroyed it must be, for surely Hall had no reason to steal or suppress the will that favored Florence.

As a next move, I decided to interview Mr. Hall.

Such talks as I had had with him so far, had been interrupted and unsatisfactory. Now I would see him alone, and learn something from his manner and appearance.

I found him, as I had expected, in the office of his late employer. He was surrounded with papers, and was evidently very busy, but he greeted me with a fair show of cordiality, and offered me a chair.

"I want to talk to you plainly, Mr. Hall," I said, "and as I see you're busy, I will be as brief as possible."

"I've been expecting you," said he calmly. "In fact, I'm rather surprised that you have n't been here before."

"Why?" said I, eying him closely.

"Only because the inquiries made at the inquest amounted to very little, and I assumed you would question all the members of the household again."

"I'm not sure that 's necessary," I responded, following his example in adopting a light, casual tone. "I have no reason to suspect that the servants told other than the exact truth. I have talked to both the ladies, and now I've only a few questions to put to you."

He looked up, surprised at my self-satisfied air.

"Have you nailed the villain?" he asked, with a greater show of interest than he had before evinced.

"Not exactly nailed him, perhaps. But we fancy we are on the scent."

"Resent what?" he asked, looking blank.

"I did n't say 'resent.' I said, we are on the scent."

"Oh, yes. And in what direction does it lead you?"

"In your direction," I said, willing to try what effect bluntness might have upon this composed young man.

"I beg your pardon?" he said, as if he had n't heard me.

"Evidences are pointing toward you as the criminal," I said, determined to disturb his composure if I could.

Instead of showing surprise or anger, he gave a slight smile, as one would at an idea too ridiculous to be entertained for an instant. Somehow, that smile was more convincing to me than any verbal protestation could have been.

Then I realized that the man was doubtless a consummate actor, and he had carefully weighed the value of that supercilious smile against asseverations of innocence. So I went on:

"When did you first learn of the accident to the Atlantic liner, the *North America*?"

"I suppose you mean that question for a trap," he said coolly; "but I have n't the least objection to answering it. I bought a late 'extra' in New York City the night of the disaster."

"At what hour did you buy it?"

"I don't know exactly. It was some time after midnight."

Really, there was little use in questioning this man. If he had bought his paper at half-past eleven, as I felt positive he did, and if he had come out to Sedgwick on the twelve o'clock train, he was quite capable of answering me in this casual way, to throw me off the scent.

Well, I would try once again.

"Excuse me, Mr. Hall, but I am obliged to ask you some personal questions now. Are you engaged to Miss Lloyd?"

"I beg your pardon?"

His continued requests for me to repeat my questions irritated me beyond endurance. Of course it was a bluff to gain time, but he did it so politely, I could n't rebuke him.

"Are you engaged to Miss Lloyd?" I repeated.

"No, I think not," he said slowly. "She wants to break it off, and I, as a poor man, should not stand in the way of her making a brilliant marriage. She has many opportunities for such, as her uncle often told me, and I should be selfish indeed, now that she herself is poor, to hold her to her promise to me."

The hypocrite! To lay on Florence the responsibility of breaking the engagement. Truly, she was well rid of him, and I hoped I could convince her of the fact.

"But she is not so poor," I said. "Mr. Philip Crawford told me he should provide for her amply. And I'm sure that means a fair-sized fortune, for the Crawfords are generous people."

Gregory Hall's manner changed.

"Did Philip Crawford say that?" he cried. "Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure, as he said it to me."

"Then Florence and I may be happy yet," he said, and as I looked him straight in the eye, he had the grace to look ashamed of himself, and, with a rising color, he continued: "I hope you understand me, Mr. Burroughs. No man could ask a girl to marry him if he knew that meant condemning her to comparative poverty."

"No, of course not," said I sarcastically. "Then I assume that, so far as you are concerned, your engagement with Miss Lloyd is not broken?"

"By no means. In fact, I could not desert her just now, when there is a—well, a sort of a cloud over her."

"What do you mean?" I thundered. "There is no cloud over her."

"Well, you know, the gold bag and the yellow rose-leaves——"

"Be silent! The gold bag has been claimed by its owner. But you are responsible for its presence in this room! You, who brought it from the midnight train, and left it here! You who also left the late city newspaper here! You who also dropped two yellow petals from the rose in your buttonhole!"

Gregory Hall seemed to turn to stone as he listened to my words. He became white, then ashen gray. His hands clinched his chair-arms, and his eyes grew glassy and fixed.

I pushed home my advantage. "And therefore, traced by these undeniable evidences, I know that you are the slayer of Joseph Craw-

ford. You killed your friend, your benefactor, your employer, in order that he might not disinherit the girl whose *fortune* you wish to acquire by marrying her!"

Though I had spoken in low tones, my own intense emotion made my words emphatic, and as I finished I was perhaps the more excited of the two.

For Hall's composure had returned; his face resumed its natural color; his eyes their normal expression—that of cold indifference.

"Mr. Burroughs," he said quietly, "you must be insane."

"That is no answer to my accusations," I stormed. "I tell you of the most conclusive evidence against yourself, and instead of any attempt to refute it you mildly remark, 'You are insane.' It is you who are insane, Mr. Hall, if you think you can escape arrest and trial for the murder of Joseph Crawford."

"Oh, I think I can," was his only answer, with that maddening little smile of his.

"Then where were you on Tuesday night?"

"Excuse me?"

"Where were you on Tuesday night?"

"That I refuse to tell—as I have refused before, and shall always refuse."

"Because you were here, and because you have too much wisdom to try to prove a false alibi."

He looked at me half admiringly, "You are right in that," he said. "It is extremely foolish for any one to fake an alibi, and I certainly never should try to do so."

"That's how I know you were here," I replied triumphantly.

"You do, do you? Well, Mr. Burroughs, I don't pretend to misunderstand you—for Miss Lloyd has told me all about Mrs. Cunningham and her bag that she left in the train. But I will say this: if you think I came out on that midnight train, go and ask the conductor. He knows me, and as I often do come out on that train, he *may* remember that I was *not* on it that night. And while you're about it, and since you consider that late newspaper a clue, also ask him who *was* on the train that might have come here afterward."

If this was bluffing, it was a very clever bluff, and magnificently carried out. Probably his hope was that the conductor could not say definitely as to Hall's presence on the late train, and any other names he might mention would only complicate matters.

But before I left I made one more attempt to get at this man's secret.

"Mr. Hall," I began, "I am not unfriendly. In fact, for Miss Lloyd's sake as well as your own, I should like to remove every shadow of suspicion that hovers near either or both of you."

"I know that," he said quickly. "Don't think I can't see through your 'friendliness' to Miss Lloyd! But be careful there, Mr. Burroughs. A man does not allow too many 'friendly' glances toward the girl he is engaged to."

So he had discovered my secret! Well, perhaps it was a good thing. Now I could fight for Florence more openly if necessary.

"You are right, Mr. Hall," I went on. "I hold Miss Lloyd in very high esteem, and I assure you, as man to man, that so long as you and she are betrothed, neither of you will have cause to look on me as other than a detective earnest in his work in your behalf."

"Thank you," said Hall, a little taken aback by my frankness.

I went away soon after that, and without quizzing him any further, for, though I still suspected him, I realized that he would never say anything to incriminate himself.

The theory that the criminal was some one who came in on that midnight train, was plausible indeed; but what a scope it offered!

Why, a total stranger to Sedgwick might have come and gone, entirely unobserved, in the crowd.

It was with little hope, therefore, that I arranged for an interview with the conductor of the train.

He lived in Hunterton, a few stations from West Sedgwick, and, after ascertaining by telephone that he could see me the next day, I went to his house.

"Well, no," he replied, after thinking over my query a bit; "I don't think Mr. Hall came out from New York that night. I'm 'most sure he did n't, because he usually gives me his newspaper as he steps off the train, and I did n't get any 'extra' that night."

Of course this was n't positive proof that Hall was n't there, so I asked him to tell me all the West Sedgwick people that he did remember as being on his train that night.

He mentioned a dozen or more, but they were almost entirely names unknown to me.

"Do you remember the Cunninghams being on the train?" I asked.

"Those Marathon Park people? Oh, yes. They were a gay party, —coming back from a theatre supper, I suppose. And that reminds me: Philip Crawford sat right behind the Cunninghams. I forgot him before. Well, I guess that's all the West Sedgwick people I can remember."

I went away not much the wiser, but with a growing thought that buzzed in my brain.

It was absurd, of course. But he had said Philip Crawford had sat right behind Mrs. Cunningham. How, then, could he help seeing the gold bag she left behind, when she got out at the station just

before West Sedgwick? Indeed, who else could have seen it but the man in the seat directly behind? Even if some one else had picked it up and carried it from the car, Mr. Crawford must have seen it.

Moreover, why had n't he said he was on that train? Why conceal such a simple matter? Again, who had profited by the whole affair? And why had Gregory Hall said: "Ask the conductor who *did* get off that train?"

The rose petals were already explained by Florence. If, then, Philip Crawford had, much later, come to his brother's with the gold bag and the late newspaper, and had gone away and left them there, and had never told of all this, was there not a new direction in which to look?

But Philip Crawford! The dead man's own brother! Impossible!

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP CRAWFORD'S STORY

THE enormity of suspecting Philip Crawford was so great, to my mind, that I went at once to the district attorney's office for consultation with him.

Mr. Goodrich listened to what I had to say, and then, when I waited for comment, said quietly:

"Do you know, Mr. Burroughs, I have thought all along that Philip Crawford was concealing something, but I did n't think, and don't think now, that he has any guilty secret of his own. I rather fancied he might know something that, if told, would be detrimental to Miss Lloyd's cause."

"It may be so," I returned, "but I can't see how that would make him conceal the fact of his having been on that late train Tuesday night. Why, I discussed with him the possibility of Hall's coming out on it, and it would have been only natural to say he was on it, and did n't see Hall."

"Unless he did see him," remarked the district attorney.

"Yes; there's that possibility. He may be shielding Hall, for Miss Lloyd's sake—and—"

"Let's go to see him," suggested Mr. Goodrich. "I believe in the immediate following up of any idea we may have."

It was about five in the afternoon, an hour when we were likely to find Mr. Crawford at home, so we started off at once, and on reaching his house we were told that Mr. Randolph was with him in the library, but that he would see us. So to the library we went, and found Mr. Crawford and his lawyer hard at work on the papers of the Joseph Crawford estate.

Perhaps it was imagination, but I thought I detected a look of

apprehension on Philip Crawford's face, as we entered, but he greeted us in his pleasant, simple way, and asked us to be seated.

"To come right to the point, Mr. Crawford," said the district attorney, "Mr. Burroughs and I are still searching for new light on the tragedy of your brother's death. And now Mr. Burroughs wants to put a few questions to you, which may help him in his quest."

Philip Crawford looked straight at me with his piercing eyes, and it seemed to me that he straightened himself, as for an expected blow.

"Yes, Mr. Burroughs," he said courteously. "What is it you want to ask?"

So plain and straightforward was his manner, that I decided to be equally direct.

"Did you come out in that midnight train from New York last Tuesday night?" I began.

"I did," he replied, in even tones.

"While on the train did you sit behind a lady who left a gold bag in the seat when she got out?"

"I did."

"Did you pick up that bag and take it away with you?"

"I did."

"Then, Mr. Crawford, as that is the gold bag that was found in your brother's office, I think you owe a more detailed explanation."

To say that the lawyer and the district attorney, who heard these questions and answers, were astounded, is putting it too mildly. They were almost paralyzed with surprise and dismay.

To hear these condemning assertions straight from the lips of the man they incriminated was startling indeed.

"You are right," said Philip Crawford. "I do owe an explanation, and I shall give it here and now."

Although what he was going to say was doubtless a confession, Mr. Crawford's face showed an unmistakable expression of relief. He seemed like a man who had borne a terrible secret around with him for the past week, and was now glad that he was about to impart it to some one else.

He spoke very gravely, but with no faltering or hesitation.

"This is a solemn confession," he said, turning to his lawyer, "and is made to the district attorney, with yourself and Mr. Burroughs as witnesses."

Mr. Randolph bowed his head, in acknowledgment of this formal statement.

"I am a criminal in the eyes of the law," said Mr. Crawford, in an impersonal tone, which I knew he adopted to hide any emotion he might feel. "I have committed a dastardly crime. But I am not the murderer of my brother Joseph."

We all felt our hearts lightened of a great load, for it was impossible to disbelieve that calm statement and the clear gaze of those truthful, unafraid eyes.

"The story I have to tell will sound as if I might have been my brother's slayer, and this is why I assert the contrary at the outset."

Pausing here, Mr. Crawford unlocked the drawer of a desk and took out a small pistol, which he laid on the table.

"That," he said, "is my revolver, and it is the weapon with which my brother was killed."

I felt a choking sensation. Philip Crawford's manner was so far removed from a sensational or melodramatic effect, that it was doubly impressive. I believed his statement that he did not kill his brother, but what *could* these further revelations mean? Hall? Florence? Young Philip? Whom would Philip Crawford thus shield for a whole week, and then, when forced to do so, expose?

"You are making strange declarations, Mr. Crawford," said Lawyer Randolph, who was already white-faced and trembling.

"I know it," went on Philip Crawford, "and I trust you three men will hear my story through, and then take such measures as you see fit.

"This pistol, as I said, is my property. Perhaps about a month ago, I took it over to my brother Joseph. He has always been careless of danger, and as he was in the habit of sitting in his office until very late, with the long windows open on a dark veranda, I often told him he ought to keep a weapon in his desk, by way of general protection. Then, after there had been a number of burglaries in West Sedgwick, I took this pistol to him, and begged him as a favor to me to let it stay in his desk drawer as a precautionary measure. He laughed at my solicitude, but put it away in a drawer, the upper right-hand one, among his business papers. So much for the pistol.

"Last Tuesday night I came out from New York on that midnight train, that reaches West Sedgwick station at one o'clock. In the train I did not notice especially who sat near me, but when I reached our station and started to leave the car, I noticed a gold bag in the seat ahead. I picked it up, and, with a half-formed intention of handing it to the conductor, I left the train. But as I stepped off I did not see the conductor, and, though I looked about for him, he did not appear, and the train moved on. I looked in the station, but the ticket agent was not visible, and as the hour was so late I slipped the bag into my pocket, intending to hand it over to the railroad authorities next morning. In fact, I thought little about it, for I was very much perturbed over some financial considerations. I had been reading my newspaper all the way out from the city. It was an 'extra,' with the account of the steamship accident."

Here Mr. Crawford looked at me, as much as to say, "There's your precious newspaper clue," but his manner was indicative only of sadness and grief; he had no cringing air as of a murderer.

"However, I merely skimmed the news about the steamer, so interested was I in the stock market reports. I need n't now tell the details, but I knew that Joseph had a 'corner' in X. Y. stock. I was myself a heavy investor in it, and I began to realize that I must see Joseph at once, and learn his intended actions for the next day. If he threw his stock on the market, there would be a drop of perhaps ten points and I should be a large loser, if, indeed, I were not entirely wiped out. So I went from the train straight to my brother's home. When I reached the gate, I saw there was a low light in his office, so I went round that way, instead of to the front door. As I neared the veranda, and went up the steps, I drew from my overcoat pocket the newspaper, and, feeling the gold bag there also, I drew that out, thinking to show it to Joseph. As I look back now, I think it occurred to me that the bag might be Florence's; I had seen her carry one like it. But, as you can readily understand, I gave no coherent thought to the bag, as my mind was full of the business matter. The French window was open, and I stepped inside."

Mr. Crawford paused here, but he gave way to no visible emotion. He was like a man with an inexorable duty to perform, and no wish to stop until it was finished.

But truth was stamped unmistakably in every word and every look.

"Only the desk light was turned on, but that gave light enough for me to see my brother sitting dead in his chair. I satisfied myself that he was really dead, and then, in a sort of daze, I looked about the room. Though I felt benumbed and half-unconscious, physically, my thoughts worked rapidly. On the desk before him I saw his will."

An irrepressible exclamation from Mr. Randolph was the only sound that greeted this astonishing statement.

"Yes," and Mr. Crawford took a document from the same drawer whence he had taken the pistol; "there is Joseph Crawford's will, leaving all his property to Florence Lloyd."

Mechanically, Mr. Randolph took the paper his client passed to him, and, after a glance at it, laid it on the table in front of him.

"That was my crime," said Philip Crawford solemnly, "and I thank God that I can confess it and make restitution. I must have been suddenly possessed of a devil of greed, for the moment I saw that will, I knew that if I took it away the property would be mine, and I would then run no danger of being ruined by my stock speculations. I had a dim feeling that I should eventually give all, or a large part, of the fortune to Florence, but at the moment I was obsessed by evil, and I—I stole my brother's will."

It was an honest confession of an awful crime. But under the spell of that strong, low voice, and the upright bearing of that manly figure, we could not, at the moment, condemn; we could only listen and wait.

"Then," the speaker proceeded, "I was seized with the terrific, unreasoning fear that I dare say always besets a malefactor. I had but one thought, to get away, and leave the murder to be discovered by some one else. In a sort of subconscious effort at caution, I took my pistol, lest it prove incriminating evidence against me, but in my mad frenzy of fear, I gave no thought to the gold bag or the newspaper. I came home, secreted the will and the revolver, and ever since I have had no doubts as to the existence of a hell. A thousand times I have been on the point of making this confession, and even had it not been brought about as it has, I must have given way soon. No mortal could stand out long under the pressure of remorse and regret that has been on me this past week. Now, gentlemen, I have told you all. The action you may take in this matter must be of your own choosing. But, except for the stigma of past sin, I stand again before the world, with no unconfessed crime upon my conscience. I stole the will; I have restored it. But my hands are clean of the blood of my brother, and I am now free to add my efforts to yours to find the criminal and avenge the crime."

He had not raised his voice above those low, even tones in which he had started his recital; he had made no bid for leniency of judgment; but, to a man, his three hearers rose and held out friendly hands to him as he finished his story.

"Thank you," he said simply, as he accepted this mute token of our belief in his word. "I am gratified at your kindly attitude, but I realize, none the less, what this will all mean for me. Not only myself but my innocent family must share my disgrace. However, that is part of the wrong-doer's punishment—that results fall not only on his own head, but on the heads and hearts of his loved ones."

"Mr. Goodrich," said Mr. Randolph, "I don't know how you look upon this matter from your official viewpoint, but unless you deem it necessary, I should think that this confidence of Mr. Crawford's need never be given to the public. May we not simply state that the missing will has been found, without any further disclosures?"

"I am not asking for any such consideration," said Philip Crawford. "If you decide upon such a course, it will be entirely of your own volition."

The district attorney hesitated.

"Speaking personally," he said, at last, "I may say that I place full credence in Mr. Crawford's story. I am entirely convinced of the absolute truth of all his statements. But, speaking officially, I

may say that in a court of justice witnesses would be required, who could corroborate his words."

"But such witnesses are manifestly impossible to procure," said Mr. Randolph.

"Certainly they are," I agreed, "and I should like to make this suggestion. Believing, as we do, in Mr. Crawford's story, it becomes important testimony in the case. Now, if it were made public, it would lose its importance, for it would set ignorant tongues wagging, and give rise to absurd and untrue theories, and result in blocking our best-meant efforts. So I propose that we keep the matter to ourselves for a time—say a week or a fortnight—keeping Mr. Crawford under surveillance, if need be. Then we can work on the case, with the benefit of the suggestions offered by Mr. Crawford's revelations; and I, for one, think such benefit of immense importance."

"That will do," said Mr. Goodrich, whose troubled face had cleared at my suggestion. "You are quite right, Mr. Burroughs. And the 'surveillance' will be a mere empty formality. For a man who has confessed as Mr. Crawford has done, is not going to run away from the consequences of his confession."

"I am not," said Mr. Crawford. "And I am grateful for this respite from unpleasant publicity. I will take my punishment when it comes, but I feel, with Mr. Burroughs, that more progress can be made if what I have told you is not at once generally known."

"Where now does suspicion point?"

It was Mr. Randolph who spoke. His legal mind had already gone ahead of the present occasion, and was applying the new facts to the old theories.

"To Gregory Hall," said the district attorney.

"Wait," said I. "If Mr. Crawford left the bag and the newspaper in the office, we have no evidence whatever that Mr. Hall came out on that late train."

"Nor did he need to," said Mr. Goodrich, who was thinking rapidly. "He might have come on an earlier train, or, for that matter, not by train at all. He may have come out from town in a motor car."

This was possible; but it did not seem to me probable. A motor-car was a conspicuous way for a man to come out from New York and return, if he wished to keep his visit secret. Still, he could have left the car at some distance from the house, and walked the rest of the way.

"Did Mr. Hall know that a revolver was kept in Mr. Crawford's desk drawer?" I asked.

"He did," replied Philip Crawford. "He was present when I took my pistol over to Joseph."

"Then," said Mr. Goodrich, "the case looks to me very serious against Mr. Hall. We have proved his motive, his opportunity, and his method, or, rather, means, of committing the crime. Add to this his unwillingness to tell where he was on Tuesday night, and I see sufficient justification for issuing a warrant for his arrest."

"I don't know," said Philip Crawford, "whether such immediate measures are advisable. I don't want to influence you, Mr. Goodrich, but suppose we send for Mr. Hall, and question him a little. Then, if it seems to you best, arrest him."

"That is a good suggestion, Mr. Crawford," said the district attorney. "We can have a sort of court of inquiry right here by ourselves, and perhaps Mr. Hall will, by his own words, justify or relieve our suspicions."

Gregory Hall was summoned by telephone, and not long after he arrived. He was cool and collected, as usual, and I wondered if even his arrest would disturb his calm.

"We are pursuing the investigation of Mr. Joseph Crawford's death, Mr. Hall," the district attorney began, "and we wish, in the course of our inquiries, to ask some questions of you."

"Certainly, sir," said Gregory Hall, with an air of polite indifference.

"And I may as well tell you at the outset," went on Mr. Goodrich, a little irritated at the young man's attitude, "that you, Mr. Hall, are under suspicion."

"Yes?" said Hall interrogatively. "But I was not here that night."

"That's just the point, sir. You say you were not here, but you refuse to say where you were. Now, wherever you may have been that night, a frank admission of it will do you less harm than this incriminating concealment of the truth."

"In that case," said Hall easily, "I suppose I may as well tell you. But first, since you practically accuse me, may I ask if any new developments have been brought to light?"

"One has," said Mr. Goodrich. "The missing will has been found."

"What?" cried Hall, unable to conceal his satisfaction at this information.

"Yes," said Mr. Goodrich coldly, disgusted at the plainly apparent mercenary spirit of the man; "yes, the will of Mr. Joseph Crawford, which bequeaths the bulk of his estate to Miss Lloyd, is safe in Mr. Randolph's possession. But that fact in no way affects your connection with the case, or our desire to learn where you were on Tuesday night."

"Pardon me, Mr. Goodrich; I didn't hear all that you said."

Bluffing again, thought I; and, truly, it seemed to me rather a

clever way to gain time for consideration, and yet let his answers appear spontaneous.

The district attorney repeated his question, and now Gregory Hall answered deliberately:

"I still refuse to tell you where I was. It in no way affects the case; it is a private matter of my own. I was in New York City, from the time I left West Sedgwick at six o'clock on Monday, until I returned the next morning. Further than that I will give no account of my doings."

"Then we must assume you were engaged in some occupation of which you are ashamed to tell."

Hall shrugged his shoulders. "You may assume what you choose," he said. "I was not here, I had no hand in Mr. Crawford's death, and knew nothing of it until my return next day."

"You knew Mr. Crawford kept a revolver in his desk. You must know it is not there now."

Hall looked troubled.

"I know nothing about that revolver," he said. "I saw it the day Mr. Philip Crawford brought it there, but I have never seen it since."

He sounded honest enough, but if he were the criminal, he would, of course, make these same avowals.

"Well, Mr. Hall," said the district attorney, with an air of finality, "we suspect you. We hold that you had motive, opportunity, and means for this crime. Therefore, unless you can prove an alibi for Tuesday night, and bring witnesses to prove where you were, we must arrest you, on suspicion, for the murder of Joseph Crawford."

Gregory Hall deliberated silently for a few moments, then he said:

"I am innocent. But I persist in my refusal to allow intrusion on my private and personal affairs. Arrest me if you will, but you will yet learn your mistake."

I can never explain it, even to myself, but something in the man's tone and manner convinced me, even against my own will, that he spoke the truth.

CHAPTER X.

FLEMING STONE'S WORK

THE news of Gregory Hall's arrest flew through the town like wild-fire.

That evening I went to call on Florence Lloyd, though I had little hope that she would see me.

To my surprise, however, she welcomed me almost eagerly, and, though I knew she wanted to see me only for what legal help I might give her, I was glad even of this.

And yet her manner was far from impersonal. Indeed, she showed a slight embarrassment in my presence, which, if I had dared, I should have been glad to think meant a growing interest in our friendship.

"You have heard all?" I asked, knowing from her manner that she had.

"Yes," she replied; "Mr. Hall was here for dinner, and then—then he went away to—"

"To prison," I finished quietly. "Florence, I cannot think he is the murderer of your uncle."

If she noticed this, my first use of her Christian name, she offered no remonstrance, and I went on:

"To be sure, they have proved that he had motive, means, opportunity, and all that, but it is only negative evidence. If he would but tell where he was on Tuesday night, he could so easily free himself. Why will he not tell?"

"I don't know," she said, looking thoughtful. "But I cannot think he was here, either. When he said good-by to me to-night, he did not seem at all apprehensive. He only said he was arrested wrongfully, and that he would soon be set free again. You know his way of taking everything casually."

"Yes, I do. And now that you are your uncle's heiress, I suppose he no longer wishes to break the engagement between you and him."

I said this bitterly, for I loathed the nature that could thus turn about in accordance with the wheel of fortune.

To my surprise, she too spoke bitterly.

"Yes," she said; "he insists *now* that we are engaged, and that he never really wanted to break it. He has shown me positively that it is my money that attracts him, and if it were not that I don't want to seem to desert him now, when he is in trouble—"

She paused, and my heart beat rapidly. Could it be that at last she saw Gregory Hall as he really was, and that his mercenary spirit had killed her love for him? At least, she had intimated this, and, forcing myself to be content with that for the present, I said:

"Would you, then, if you could, get him out of this trouble?"

"Gladly. I do not think he killed Uncle Joseph, but I'm sure I do not know who did. Do you?"

"I have n't the least idea," I answered honestly, for there, in Florence Lloyd's presence, gazing into the depths of her clear eyes, my last, faint suspicion of her wrong-doing faded away. "And it is this total lack of suspicion that makes the case so simple, and therefore so difficult. A more complicated case offers some points on which to build a theory. I do not blame Mr. Goodrich for suspecting Mr. Hall, for there seems to be no one else to suspect."

Just then Mr. Lemuel Porter dropped in for an evening call. Of course, we talked over the events of the day, and Mr. Porter was almost vehement in his denunciation of the sudden move of the district attorney.

"It's absurd," he said, "utterly absurd. Gregory Hall never did the thing. I've known Hall for years, and he is n't that sort of a man. I believe Philip Crawford's story, of course, but the murderer, who came into the office after Florence's visit to her uncle, and before Philip arrived, was some stranger from out of town—some man whom none of us know; who had some grievance against Joseph, and who deliberately came and went during that midnight hour."

I agreed with Mr. Porter. I had thought all along it was some one unknown to the Sedgwick people, but some one well known to Joseph Crawford. For, had it been an ordinary burglar, the victim would at least have raised a protecting hand.

"Of course Hall will be set free at once," continued Mr. Porter, "but it was a foolish thing to do."

"Still, he ought to prove his alibi," I said.

"Very well, then; make him prove it. Give him the third degree, if necessary, and find out where he was on Tuesday night."

"I doubt if they could get it out of him," I observed, "if he continues determined not to tell."

"Then he deserves his fate," said Mr. Porter, a little petulantly. "He can free himself by a word. If he refuses to do so, it's his own business."

"But I'd like to help him," said Florence, almost timidly. "Is there no way I can do so, Mr. Burroughs?"

"Indeed there is," I said. "You are a rich woman now; use some of your wealth to employ the services of Fleming Stone, and I can assure you the truth will be discovered."

"Indeed I will," said Florence. "Please send for him at once."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Porter. "It is n't necessary at all. Mr. Burroughs here, and young Parmalee, are all the detectives we need. Get Hall to free himself, as he can easily do, and then set to work in earnest to run down the real villain."

"No, Mr. Porter," said Florence, with firmness; "Gregory will not tell his secret, whatever it is. I know his stubborn nature. He'll stay in prison until he's freed, as he is sure he will be, but he won't tell what he has determined not to divulge. No, I am glad I can do something definite at last, toward avenging Uncle Joseph's death. Please send for Mr. Stone, Mr. Burroughs, and I will gladly pay his fees and expenses." Mr. Porter expostulated further, but to no avail. Florence insisted on sending for the great detective.

So I sent for him.

He came two days later, and in the interval nothing further had been learned from Gregory Hall. The man was an enigma to me. He was calm and impassive as ever. Courteous, though never cordial, and apparently without the least apprehension of ever being convicted for the crime which had caused his arrest.

Indeed, he acted just as an innocent man would act; innocent of the murder, that is, but resolved to conceal his whereabouts of Tuesday night, whatever that resolve might imply.

To me, it did not imply crime. Something he wished to conceal, certainly; but I could not think a criminal would act so. A criminal is usually ready with an alibi, whether it can be proved or not.

When Fleming Stone arrived I met him at the station and took him at once to the inn, where I had engaged rooms for him.

We first had a long conversation alone, in which I told him everything I knew concerning the murder.

"When did it happen?" he asked, for, though he had read some of the newspaper accounts, the date had escaped him.

I told him, and added, "Why, I was called here just after I left you at the Metropolis Hotel that morning. Don't you remember, you deduced a lot of information from a pair of shoes which were waiting to be cleaned."

"Yes, I remember," said Stone, smiling a little at the recollection.

"And I tried to make similar deductions from the gold bag and the newspaper, but I can't do it. I bungled matters every time. My deductions are mostly from the witnesses' looks or tones when giving evidence."

"On the stand?"

"Not necessarily on the stand. I've learned much from talking to the principals informally."

"And where do your suspicions point?"

"Nowhere. I've suspected Florence Lloyd and Gregory Hall, in turn, and in collusion; but now I suspect neither of them."

"Why not Hall?"

"His manner is too frank and unconcerned."

"A good bluff for a criminal to use."

"Then he won't tell where he was that night."

"If he is the murderer, he can't tell. A false alibi is so easily riddled. It's rather clever to keep doggedly silent. But tell me again about his attitude toward Miss Lloyd, in the successive developments of the will question."

Fleming Stone was deeply interested as I rehearsed how, when Florence was supposed to be penniless, he wished to break the engagement. When Philip Crawford offered to provide for her, Mr. Hall was uncertain; but when the will was found, and Florence was known

to inherit all her uncle's property, then Gregory Hall not only held her to the engagement, but said he had never wished to break it.

"H'm," said Stone. "Pretty clear that the young man is a fortune-hunter."

"He is," I agreed. "I felt sure of that from the first."

"And he is now under arrest, calmly waiting for some one to prove his innocence, so he can marry the heiress."

"That's about the size of it," I said. "But I don't think Florence is quite as much in love with him as she was. She seems to have realized his mercenary spirit."

Perhaps an undue interest in my voice or manner disclosed to this astute man the state of my own affections, for he gave me a quizzical glance, and said, "Oho! sits the wind in that quarter?"

"Yes," I said, determined to be frank with him. "It does. I want you to free Gregory Hall, if he's innocent. Then if, for any reason, Miss Lloyd sees fit to dismiss him, I shall most certainly try to win her affections. As I came to this determination when she was supposed to be penniless, I can scarcely be accused of fortune-hunting myself."

"Indeed, you can't, old chap. You're not that sort. Well, let's go to see your district attorney and his precious prisoner, and see what's to be done."

We went to the district attorney's office, and, later, accompanied by him and by Mr. Randolph, we visited Gregory Hall.

As I had expected, Mr. Hall wore the same unperturbed manner he always showed, and when Fleming Stone was introduced, Hall greeted him coldly, with absolutely no show of interest in the man or his work.

Fleming Stone's own kindly face took on a slight expression of hauteur, as he noticed his reception, but he said, pleasantly enough:

"I am here in an effort to aid in establishing your innocence, Mr. Hall."

"I beg your pardon?" said Hall listlessly.

I wondered whether this asking to have a remark repeated was merely a foolish habit of Hall's, or whether, as I had heretofore guessed, it was a ruse to gain time.

Fleming Stone looked at him a little more sharply as he repeated his remark in clear, even tones.

"Thank you," said Hall, pleasantly enough. "I shall be glad to be freed from this unjust suspicion."

"And as a bit of friendly advice," went on Stone, "I strongly urge that you reveal to us, confidentially, where you were on Tuesday night."

Hall looked the speaker straight in the eye.

"That," he said, "I must still refuse to do."

Fleming Stone rose and walked toward the window.

"I think," he said, "the proof of your innocence may depend upon this point."

Gregory Hall turned his head, and followed Stone with his eyes.

"What did you say, Mr. Stone?" he asked quietly.

The detective returned to his seat.

"I said," he replied, "that the proof of your innocence might depend on your telling this secret of yours. But I begin to think now you will be freed from suspicion whether you tell it or not."

Instead of looking glad at this assurance, Gregory Hall gave a start, and an expression of fear came into his eyes.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Have you any letters in your pocket, Mr. Hall?" went on Fleming Stone in a suave voice.

"Yes; several. Why?"

"I do not ask to read them. Merely show me the lot."

With what seemed to be an unwilling but enforced movement, Mr. Hall drew four or five letters from his breast pocket and handed them to Fleming Stone.

"They've all been looked over, Mr. Stone," said the district attorney; "and they have no bearing on the matter of the crime."

"Oh, I don't want to read them," said the detective.

He ran over the lot carelessly, not taking the sheets from the envelopes, and returned them to their owner.

Gregory Hall looked at him as if fascinated. What revelation was this man about to make?

"Mr. Hall," Fleming Stone began, "I've no intention of forcing your secret from you. But I shall ask you some questions, and you may do as you like about answering them. First, you refuse to tell where you were during the night last Tuesday. I take it, you mean you refuse to tell how or where you spent the evening. Now, will you tell us where you lodged that night?"

"I fail to see any reason for telling you," answered Hall, after a moment's thought. "I have said I was in New York City, that is enough."

"The reason you may as well tell us," went on Mr. Stone, "is because it is a very simple matter for us to find out. You doubtless were at some hotel, and you went there because you could not get a room at your club. In fact, this was stated when the coroner telephoned for you, the morning after the murder. I mean, it was stated that the club bed-rooms were all occupied. I assume, therefore, that you lodged at some hotel, and, as a canvass of the city hotels would be a simple matter, you may as well save us that trouble."

"Oh, very well," said Gregory Hall sullenly; "then I did spend the night at a hotel. It was the Metropolis Hotel, and you will find my name duly on the register."

"I have no doubt of it," said Stone pleasantly. "Now that you have told us this, have you any objection to telling us at what time you returned to the hotel, after your evening's occupation, whatever it may have been?"

"Eh?" said Hall abstractedly. He turned his head as he spoke, and Fleming Stone threw me a quizzical smile which I did n't in the least understand.

"You may as well tell us," said Stone, after he had repeated his question, "for if you withhold it, the night clerk can give us this information."

"Well," said Hall, who now looked distinctly sulky, "I don't remember exactly, but I think I turned in somewhere between twelve and one o'clock."

"And as it was a late hour, you slept rather late next morning," suggested Stone.

"Oh, I don't know. I was at Mr. Crawford's New York office by half-past ten."

"A strange coincidence, Burroughs," said Fleming Stone, turning to me.

"Eh? Beg pardon?" said Hall, turning his head also.

"Mr. Hall," said Stone, suddenly facing him again, "are you deaf? Why do you ask to have remarks repeated?"

Hall looked slightly apologetic. "I am a little deaf," he said; "but only in one ear. And only at times—or, rather, it's worse at times. If I have a cold, for instance."

"Or in damp weather?" said Stone. "Mr. Hall, I have questioned you enough. I will now tell these gentlemen, since you refuse to do so, where you were on the night of Mr. Crawford's murder. You were not in West Sedgwick, or near it. You are absolutely innocent of the crime or any part in it."

Gregory Hall straightened up perceptibly, like a man exonerated from all blame. But he quailed again, as Fleming Stone, looking straight at him, continued: "You left West Sedgwick at six that evening, as you have said. You registered at the Metropolis Hotel, after learning that you could not get a room at your club. And then—you went over to Brooklyn to meet, or to call on, a young woman living in that borough. You took her back to New York to the theatre or some such entertainment, and afterward escorted her back to her home. The young woman wore a street costume, by which I mean a cloth gown without a train. You did not have a cab, but, after leaving the car, you walked for a rather long distance in Brooklyn.

It was raining, and you were both under one umbrella. Am I correct, so far?"

At last Gregory Hall's calm was disturbed. He looked at Fleming Stone as at a supernatural being. And small wonder. For the truth of Stone's statements was evident from Hall's amazement at them.

"You—you saw us!" he gasped.

"No, I did n't see you; it is merely a matter of observation, deduction, and memory. You recollect the muddy shoes?" he added, turning to me.

Did I recollect! Well, rather! And it certainly was a coincidence that we had chanced to examine those shoes that morning at the hotel.

As for Mr. Randolph and the district attorney, they were quite as much surprised as Hall.

"Can you prove this astonishing story, Mr. Stone?" asked Mr. Goodrich, with an incredulous look.

"Oh, yes, in lots of ways," returned Stone. "For one thing, Mr. Hall has in his pocket now a letter from the young lady. The whole matter is of no great importance except as it proves Mr. Hall was not in West Sedgwick that night, and so is not the murderer."

"But why conceal so simple a matter? Why refuse to tell of the episode?" asked Mr. Randolph.

"Because," and now Fleming Stone looked at Hall with accusation in his glance—"because Mr. Hall is very anxious that his fiancée shall not know of his attentions to the young lady in Brooklyn."

"Oho!" said Mr. Goodrich, with sudden enlightenment. "I see it all now. Is it the truth, Mr. Hall? Did you go to Brooklyn and back that night, as Mr. Stone has described?"

Gregory Hall fidgeted in an embarrassed way. But, unable to escape the piercing gaze of Stone's eyes, he admitted grudgingly that the detective had told the truth, adding, "But it's wizardry, that's what it is! How could he know?"

"I had reason for suspicion," said Stone; "and when I found you were deaf in your right ear, and that you had in your pocket a letter addressed in a feminine hand, and postmarked 'Brooklyn,' I was sure."

"It's all true," said Hall slowly. "You have the facts all right. But, unless you have had me shadowed, will you tell me how you knew it all?"

And then Fleming Stone told of his observations and deductions when we noticed the muddied shoes at the Metropolis Hotel that morning.

"But," he said, as he concluded, "when I hastily adjudged the young lady to be deaf in the left ear, I see now I was mistaken. As soon as I realized Mr. Hall himself is deaf in the right ear, especially

so in damp or wet weather, I saw that it fitted the case as well as if the lady had been deaf in her left ear. Then a note in his pocket from a lady in Brooklyn made me quite sure I was right."

"But, Mr. Stone," said Lawyer Randolph, "it is very astonishing that you should make those deductions from those shoes, and then come out here and meet the owner of the shoes."

"It seems more remarkable that it really is, Mr. Randolph," was the response; "for I am continually observing whatever comes to my notice. Hundreds of my deductions are never verified, or even thought of again; so it is not so strange that now and then one should prove of use in my work."

"Well," said the district attorney, "it seems wonderful to me. But now that Mr. Hall has proved his alibi, or, rather, Mr. Stone has proved it for him, of course he is released from custody, and we must begin anew our search for the real criminal."

"One moment," said Gregory Hall. "As you know, gentlemen, I endeavored to keep this little matter of my going to Brooklyn a secret. As it has no possible bearing on the case of Mr. Crawford, may I ask of you to respect my desire that you say nothing about it."

"For my part," said the district attorney, "I am quite willing to grant Mr. Hall's request. I have put him to unnecessary trouble and embarrassment by having him arrested, and I shall be glad to do him this favor that he asks, by way of amends."

But Mr. Randolph seemed reluctant to make the required promise, and Fleming Stone looked at Hall, and said nothing.

Then I spoke out, and, perhaps with scant courtesy, I said:

"I, for one, refuse to keep this revelation a secret. It was discovered by the detective engaged by Miss Lloyd. Therefore, I think Miss Lloyd is entitled to the knowledge we have thus gained."

Mr. Randolph looked at me with approval. He was a good friend of Florence Lloyd's, and he was of no mind to hide from her something which it might be better for her to know.

Gregory Hall set his lips together in a way which argued no pleasant feelings toward me, but he said nothing then. He was forthwith released from custody, and the rest of us separated, having arranged to meet that evening at Miss Lloyd's home to discuss matters.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCLOSURE

EXCEPT the half-hour required for a hasty dinner, Fleming Stone devoted the intervening time to looking over the reports of the coroner's inquest, and in asking me questions about all the people who were connected with the affair.

"Burroughs," he said at last, "every one who is interested in Joseph Crawford's death has suspected Gregory Hall, except one person. Not everybody *said* they suspected him, but they did, all the same. Even Miss Lloyd was n't sure that Hall was n't the criminal. Now, there's just one person who declares that Hall did not do it, and is not implicated. Why should this person feel so sure of Hall's innocence? And, furthermore, my boy, here are a few more important questions. In which drawer of the desk was the revolver kept?"

"The upper right-hand drawer," I replied.

"I mean, what else was in that drawer?"

"Oh, important, valuable memoranda of Mr. Crawford's stocks and bonds."

"Do you mean stock certificates and actual bonds?"

"No; merely lists and certain data referring to them. The certificates themselves were in the bank."

"And the will—where had that been kept?"

"In a drawer on the other side of the desk. I know all these things, because with the lawyer and Mr. Philip Crawford, I have been through all the papers of the estate."

"Well, then, Burroughs, let us build up the scene. Mr. Joseph Crawford, after returning from his lawyer's that night, goes to his office. Naturally, he takes out his will, that he thinks of changing, and—we'll say—it is lying on his desk when Mr. Lemuel Porter calls. He talks of other matters, and the will still lies there unheeded. It is there when Miss Lloyd comes down later. She has said so. It remains there until much later—when Philip Crawford comes, and, after discovering that his brother is dead, sees the will still on the desk and takes it away with him, and also sees the pistol on the desk, and takes that, too. Now, granting that the murderer came between the time Miss Lloyd left the office and the time Philip Crawford came there, then it was while the murderer was present that the drawer which held the pistol was opened, the pistol taken out, and the murder committed. Since Mr. Joseph Crawford showed no sign of fear of violence, the murderer must have been, not a burglar or an unwelcome intruder, but a *friend*, or an acquaintance, at least. His visit must have been the reason for opening that drawer, and that *not* to get the pistol, but to look at or discuss the papers contained in that drawer. The pistol, thus disclosed, was temptingly near the hand of the visitor, and, for some reason connected with the papers in that drawer, the pistol was used by the visitor—suddenly, unpremeditatedly, but with deadly intent at the moment."

"But who—" I began.

"Hush," he said, "I see it all now—or almost all. Let us go to Philip Crawford's at once—before it is time to go to Miss Lloyd's."

We did so, and Fleming Stone, in a short business talk with Mr. Crawford, learned all that he wanted to know. Then we three went over to Florence Lloyd's home.

Awaiting us were several people. The district attorney, of course, and Lawyer Randolph. Also Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Porter, who had been asked to be present. Gregory Hall was there, too, and from his crestfallen expression, I could n't help thinking that he had had an unsatisfactory interview with Florence.

As we all sat round the library, Fleming Stone was the principal speaker.

He said: "I have come here at Miss Lloyd's request, to discover, if possible, the murderer of her uncle, Mr. Joseph Crawford. I have learned the identity of the assassin, and, if you all wish me to, I will now divulge it."

"We do wish you to, Mr. Stone," said Mr. Goodrich, and his voice trembled a little, for he knew not where the blow might fall. But after Fleming Stone's wonderful detective work in the case of Gregory Hall, the district attorney felt full confidence in his powers.

Sitting quietly by the library table, with the eyes of all the company upon him, Fleming Stone said, in effect, to them just what he had said to me. He told of the revolver in the drawer with the financial papers. He told how the midnight visitor must have been some friend or neighbor, whose coming would in no way startle or alarm Mr. Crawford, and whose interest in the question of stocks was desperate.

And then Fleming Stone turned suddenly to Lemuel Porter, and said: "Shall I go on, Mr. Porter, or will you confess here and now?"

It was as if a thunderbolt had fallen. Hitherto unsuspected, the guilt of Lemuel Porter was now apparent beyond all doubt. White-faced and shaking, his burning eyes glared at Fleming Stone.

"What are you?" he whispered, in hoarse, hissing tones. "I feared you, and I was right to fear you. I have heard of you before. I tried to prevent your coming here, but I could not. And I knew, when you came, that I was doomed—doomed!"

"Yes," he went on, looking around at the startled faces. "Yes, I killed Joseph Crawford. If I had not, he would have ruined me—financially. Randolph knows that—and Philip Crawford, too. I had no thought of murder in my heart. I came here late that night to renew the request I had made in my earlier visit that evening—that Joseph Crawford would unload his X. Y. stock gradually, and in that way save me. I had overtraded; I had pyramided my paper profits until my affairs were in such a state that a sudden drop of ten points would wipe me out entirely. But Joseph Crawford was adamant to my entreaties. He said he would see to it that at the opening of

the market the next morning X. Y. stock should be hammered down out of sight. Details are unnecessary. You lawyers and financial men understand. It was in his power to ruin or to save me and he chose to ruin me. I know why, but that concerns no one here. Then, as by chance, he moved a paper in the drawer, and I saw the pistol. In a moment of blind rage I grasped it and shot him. Death was instantaneous. Like one in a dream, I laid down the pistol, and came away. I was saved, but at what a cost! No one, I think, saw me come or go. I was afterward puzzled to know what became of the pistol, and of the will which lay on the desk when I was there. These matters have since been explained. Philip Crawford is as much a criminal as I. I shot a man, but he robbed the dead. He has confessed and made restitution, so he merits no punishment. In the nature of things, I cannot do that, but I can at least cheat the gallows."

With these words, Mr. Porter put something into his mouth and swallowed it.

Several people started toward him in dismay, but he waved them back, saying:

"Too late. Good-by, all. If possible, do not let my wife know the truth. Can't you tell her—I—I died of heart failure—or—something like that?"

The poison he had taken was of quick effect. Though a doctor was telephoned for at once, Mr. Porter was dead before he came.

Everything was now made clear, and Fleming Stone's work in West Sedgwick was done.

I was chagrined, for I felt that all he had discovered, I ought to have found out for myself.

But as I glanced at Florence, and saw her lovely eyes fixed on me, I knew that one reason I had failed in my work was because of her distracting influence on it.

"Take me away from here," she said, and I gently led her from the library.

We went into a small drawing-room, and, unable to restrain my eagerness, I said:

"Tell me, dear, have you broken with Hall?"

"Yes," she said, looking up shyly into my face. "I learned from his own lips the story of the Brooklyn girl. Then I knew that he really loves her, but wanted to marry me for my fortune. This knowledge was enough for me. I realize now that I never loved Gregory, and I have told him so."

"And you do love somebody else?" I whispered ecstatically. "Oh, Florence, I know this is not the time or the place, but just tell me, dear, if you ever love any one, it will be——"

"You," she murmured softly, and I was content.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

By Joseph M. Rogers

Author of "Educating Our Boys," etc.



SECOND PAPER—EDUCATION OUTSIDE OF BOOKS

THE oft asserted statement that the military victories of England have been won on the foot-ball grounds of her public schools (which are really private ones) is true. Whatever may be the defects of the English character and of the English school system, it cannot be denied that they are a conquering people, and with all our criticism of them and even prejudice against them, we secretly admire the way in which they have gone on for centuries making themselves masters of a large portion of the universe. And no nation rules more wisely. In no place in the world is justice so swift and so sure. The aristocracy of Great Britain is not so much that of birth as of achievement. The English schools train boys in manhood rather than in books.

When we come to examine the publicly supported school system of England, it seems on paper to be far below ours. Much less money is spent there than here, the equipment of teachers is not so thorough, the children do not go to school so long, and do not learn nearly so many things. And, what is more important, her public school system is merely in its infancy. On the other hand, we look at France, which has the most logical and most highly developed school system in the world, and educates its youth in books much better than any other people, yet France is in many respects a decaying nation. I do not mean to say that it is the beginning and end of life to hunt out vacant places of the earth, or desirable ones occupied by others, and take possession. There is a higher calling than that. But one cannot doubt that there is greater virility in Great Britain than in France, and that the American people prefer the methods of the former. We have still great things to do on our own soil without going abroad. We need some virile young men to accomplish the big things of the future. We need young men to do our work in Asia.

* The first article of this series, "Some Notable Deficiencies," was published in the January issue.

What are we doing in our elementary schools? Practically nothing but give children some book knowledge. There is no provision for sports or for any exercise of the physical qualities save in the minutest degree. All the knowledge in a library will not fit a young man for life unless he has some other parts of his nature developed. The well rounded man is more than a bookworm. Because we teach what is in books, and only what is in books, we make mistakes so grave that many good men think that there is very little in education after all. Abraham Lincoln got all his equipment from nine books, and he was not only a broadly educated, but, in a sense, a learned man.

We are improving in a thousand directions by means of inventions, discoveries, and new theories. We are intensely practical—to such a degree that by means of our machinery and our highly developed shop administration we can manufacture certain commodities cheaper than anywhere else in the world. We seem to fail only when it comes to training the youthful mind. It is a great pity that while we can take raw human material and do so much with it in the business world, we are unable to do as well as did our ancestors in the schools. We are not keeping up with the spirit of the age, which is to accomplish things by the most direct methods. The college or university student ought to be far in advance of the child in the elementary schools, have a keener mind, a better training and easier adaptability; yet in these higher institutions of learning we find about one teacher to every ten students, and each student comes daily under the tutelage of several instructors. What is good for the young man is surely good for the child.



How may we expect to develop individualism by our present system? We do not do so. It is a fact that individualism exists, but it is in spite of our school system, and not because of it. What opportunity do we give our children to learn of the beautiful in life when we house them in jail-like structures? How are we developing manhood when we keep boys cooped up like animals and treat them almost like criminals? We want to give them a chance to work hard and to play hard, to give knocks and to take knocks, to get some of the discipline of life at the very beginning, so that it will not fall upon them suddenly when they are totally unprepared.

I suppose that Lord Cromer is accounted one of the most "practical" men in the world. For thirty years he was the great British proconsul in Egypt, and he ruled the most ancient civilization of the world as it had never been ruled before. He took it when it was at its lowest ebb, and brought it to a state of prosperity never before equalled. The British nation has rightly honored and rewarded him.

Because he has accomplished so much, we have naturally looked upon him as a sort of Bismarck or Clive, a man of "blood and iron." Yet in his book, recently published, he tells us how all this was accomplished without the drawing of a sword. He ruled and governed by mere force of character and through the inspiration of lofty ideals.

It is deplorable that there is nothing in our public schools calculated to bring out such latent powers in our boys. Many grand men and women come out of our public schools, it is true, but small praise is due the schools for the result. Some think our system must be good because it is difficult and distasteful to children, on the theory that the hard thing is the greatest good. No mistake could be greater. We do want our children to learn to accomplish difficult tasks, we want them to have some stern discipline of life, but we cannot accomplish anything of the sort by our present methods. We are simply discouraging children, making them lazy, and driving them from intellectual tasks, when it is just as easy to stimulate them.

A boy will tire himself out playing baseball, while he will bitterly resent having to chop a little wood; yet he will chop wood willingly if thereby he is earning the money to see a foot-ball game. All of us work from motives, generally of a very utilitarian sort. We want certain things, and follow the line of least resistance to get them, even when the least resistance means working hard, if to do without the things is still harder. Our schools can be supplied with stimuli that will make children look upon them as a source of pleasure.



We might as well admit that we are soon to face Germany in competition for not only the world's markets but for our own. In the last twenty years the Teutons have invaded every market and driven British merchants and manufacturers almost to despair. This is not because labor is cheaper in Germany, for it is about on a par with that in England. But the Germans have, based on their school system, the most highly organized, the best developed and most extensive commercial system in the world. They have copied Great Britain and gone much further, worked much harder and more patiently. They have also copied or adopted American machinery, and if they could copy the elasticity of the American, the world would be theirs. But even with our much higher wage rates, we have still a superiority in the number of intelligent, energetic, and hopeful men in this country, men who have individuality of their own, initiative and originality. These, along with our wonderful natural resources, are the factors which have made America so great. But the fight is

going to become more bitter as our population increases and the prizes become fewer. We must make up in intelligently directed industry what we lose by paying higher wages. We want brainy, adaptable men and women in this country, and not a lot of unintelligent workmen, brothers to the ox.

It may well be that the German educational institutions err on the side of paternalism, but their errors are few compared with our own. In that country every child is made the subject of special study by the authorities. There are trade schools of every description in connection with the public schools, and not only is a boy given a chance to learn a trade, but he is induced to do so unless he has a higher ambition and a chance to fulfil it. Moreover, he is given that trade for which he is best suited, and as soon as he has finished his course, the school authorities find him a position. When a German employer is seeking lads or even young men for positions, he does not advertise in the newspapers: he sends to the school authorities, and they provide him with boys or young men who have been specially trained for the work. That, along with military discipline, is the fundamental reason for the remarkable growth of German manufactures in the last generation.

It has already been said that in this country such conditions do not exist. In every city we have numerous privately conducted business and correspondence schools, and their success shows that the demand is great. Their success is an indictment of our public schools, which should do this work. It is humiliating that the average graduate from the high school in this country is fitted for nothing in particular, and often has acquired at a critical time in his life such slovenly habits of thinking that he is not good material for the business man to make use of. And this comes after twelve or more years of his life spent in our schools.



There is no use in waiting until boys and girls are sixteen or even fourteen before giving them some practical education. There ought to be a carpenter-shop, a blacksmith-shop, a machine-shop, and cooking and sewing rooms in every one of our public schools. While many boys are not going to work with their hands, they are likely to have control of those who do, and they will need to know at least the rudiments of mechanics. No man is not better for knowing one of the mechanical trades, yet there are few men, not mechanics, who can do more with tools than drive a nail or saw a board tolerably straight. The best mathematician in a university cannot make a box any better for all his academic knowledge.

The essential difference between man and the anthropoid apes is

that the former alone has independent use of his fingers. The savages are only a little better off in this respect, having little facility with the hands. This is one reason why the negroes cannot work successfully in the Southern cotton-mills, while the poor whites who live in the mountains in a state of semi-savagery have not lost the finger adaptability learned by their ancestors through turning spinning-wheels for thirty generations. Having this use of our fingers, we should make the best of them. It is not well that girls alone should gain this benefit. They learn to play the piano easily because for generations their mothers spun and wove. Their graceful carriage is largely due to the fact that while spinning and carding wool their ancestors went through the most beautiful and useful of gymnastic exercises. We should let the boy have some of his inheritance if for no other reason than to employ his energies in a useful direction and to train his mind to accuracy.



Some years ago one of my friends—a college man of fertile ideas—taught a country school in a Western State. He was seeking health, and he conceived the idea that as he didn't like to be cooped up in the school-house on pleasant days, probably the children did n't either. So on fine days he took them out into the fields, up on the hills or down by the brook. All the time they were picnicking, he was teaching them geography, astronomy, geology, zoölogy, and—though they did n't know it—the three R's as well. At first he was laughed at, then remonstrated with, and finally brought up with a round turn. Parents joined with the directors in saying that this foolishness must stop. He had n't been hired to loaf and play with the children, but to teach them, and if he did n't want to do his work properly he could leave. He refused to resign, but stipulated that at the end of the month—making three in all that he had taught—his scholars should be examined by the county superintendent. The result was that he came off with flying colors so far as the examination was concerned, but he was too far in advance of that neighborhood and soon left—to the great regret of his pupils. But he had planted some seed destined to produce results. I know of three minds which were at this time stimulated sufficiently to accomplish great things in later life.

Of course such a plan is not feasible for many schools. I mention it only as showing how our present system may be improved by a competent teacher. I have already referred to the popularity of the kindergarten. Children love to attend these because their little minds are interested and their fingers are kept busy. They love to bring home the pretty things they have made. Mothers like the kindergarten because it is in some respects a day nursery, but every parent knows

of the change which comes when the child must give up its kindergarten and go to the dull round of the primary grade.

In these days there is much activity by settlement workers and other good persons who are trying to uplift the slums. Any one familiar with their work knows how much their success depends upon getting parents or children interested in their lives. The curse of the slums is the dull monotony and everlasting grind to be found there. The curse of the school-room is its monotony. It is no change to go simply from one book to another. The monotony comes from trying to concentrate an untrained mind wholly on academic subjects. Boys who are said to be hopelessly dull often turn out not only the brightest business men, but very bright professional men. They simply could not fit into the particular groove which was provided for them and for all the other children. It is an impossible task, and the resiliency of youth alone accounts for the fact that there are no more failures.

Some pedagogists marvel that the children of the slums are often brighter students than those in the better districts, that these poor children like their books more. The reason is that by comparison the school-room is entertainment for many of the slum children, and the mental exercises are a relief after the dull monotony of their homes. Moreover, many children are shrewd enough to see that all is not right in the home and to realize that education is the open door to better things. It is more to them than to the child of a comfortable home. But this idea is rudimentary, and seldom lasts beyond puberty, that critical time in the life of every child which not only school systems but teachers and even parents almost wholly ignore, although it is a revolutionary process of the first magnitude, and in the life of a child is second in importance only to its birth.



Our best private schools have seen that if they are to hold their own they must offer what the public school cannot give, and so we find them equipped with gymnasiums, workshops, foot-ball fields, and the like. It may well be that the pupils are pampered to some extent, but at least they are given a chance to develop in several directions. Yet very few of these institutions have reached the ideal or even approach it. These schools are expensive, but some of the same methods applied to public schools would not cost so much per capita since a much larger school population would be involved and the machinery might extend over a large territory.

At times the direful condition of the public schools has been so apparent that private efforts have been made to improve them. The

most interesting experiment of the sort was made at Menominee, Wisconsin, where Senator Stout used some of his vast wealth to make the public schools more than a place to get book-lore. He joined forces with the school authorities and spent money freely establishing schools the like of which this country had never before known. This resulted after a time in the schools being able to care for themselves on the new basis, simply because, having tasted of the good things, the people insisted on having them, regardless of cost. Then the public spirited Senator endowed an institute to work along with the public schools, to serve as an apprenticeship for those who wanted to go further in the arts. The Stout Institute is to-day one of the finest monuments to the intelligence and philanthropy of man that this country contains—better, I think, than all of the many Carnegie libraries in the whole State of Wisconsin. It would be interesting, if space allowed, to give details of the remarkable history of this institution. It is sufficient to say that it is accomplishing wonders, and that all the public schools of the vicinity are feeling the impulse.

The experiment proved several things. It showed how vastly the old system could be improved, how eagerly the youth of the country took up with the new learning and profited by it, and—which I wish to impress most—how willingly the parents paid the high price for it when they saw its worth. Any man is willing to pay fifty cents for a dollar.



The doctrine of evolution has become perhaps the most important social force in the world in the last fifty years, and especially in our own generation. It is not merely a question of the development of species or the origin of man. The bonds of slavery in which science was held during former ages have been thrown off by the discovery of some of the fundamental principles of the universe which are at variance with preconceived notions. That an immense advantage has thus come to the human race is undoubted, but, as in the case of every other revolution, troubles have followed in its train.

Evolutionary doctrines are at the basis of all our present educational theories. The individual is being lost in the consideration of the whole state of society. The general principles are correct enough, but the difficulty comes with the personal application. It appears that educators are more concerned with the youthful mind as a general entity, and less with the individual specimens who are being trained. The doctrine of evolution has not set aside the fact that every human being differs from every other one in the world, although pedagogical experts are prone to think otherwise. On the other hand, every parent looks upon his own children as substantially the only ones in the

world; at least, the only ones whose larger interests they are bound to consider. Thus we have a conflict of the first importance, and based on considerations of the very first importance. It is no wonder that there is so much friction.

There never can be established any system that is good for all the individuals in a mass, and in trying to reform our methods we have fallen into some grievous errors. Napoleon said that he would rather have an army of sheep led by a lion than an army of lions led by a sheep. That sounds well and is true enough in war, but in social life we are neither sheep nor lions, but ordinary individuals striving for success. The object of education is to provide a mental equipment for the individual so that he may not only use what he has, but develop it. It hardly need be said that a boy or girl who is shoved through the schools under conditions distasteful and generally discouraging leaves books with delight and with little desire to return to them. In a few years he may discover his mistake, and so we have night schools and night colleges, but the mass of men and women are by this time so enmeshed in domestic affairs that the time has too often passed for self help. We give hostages to fortune very early in life, and are likely to spend most of our time in a sort of bondage to them.



It is not meant that the present system should be wholly abandoned, and a return made to earlier conditions. But it is certain that if the three R's were restored to their former importance, many fads and fancies would be given up as fads and fancies in actual courses of study and replaced more profitably in other ways. Take, for instance, physiology, upon which much stress is laid in these days. It is an important subject, concerning which every child should have some fundamental instruction, but it is not necessary to spend years in studying it from text-books. An illustrated lecture of half an hour each week by a competent physician would be of far more value than the books now studied. It seems a fact that the children gain little practical benefit from this study at present. Then there is physical geography, which is made to include the elements of geology, astronomy, and zoölogy. I have never yet found the boy who did not consider this study a bore. He flounders through the book, learning some special things without getting a grasp of the whole subject, and usually is more mystified than enlightened by many of the statements. Here is a case where a simple text-book would be sufficient if supplemented by a course of illustrated lectures, which children would certainly enjoy and from which they would derive permanent benefit.

In these days great stress is laid upon what is called English,

which includes grammar, composition, literature, etc. A few authors are chosen, and children pore over these, commit some pieces to memory, and analyze them until they are tired out and disgusted. I speak from experience and wide observation. How many school children have ever heard a great piece of literature properly read? I was fourteen years old before any such thing came into my life, and I had unusual advantages in this respect. I was brought up on Whittier and knew many of his poems by heart without getting the least inspiration from them. One day I chanced to drop into a class in rhetoric in a neighboring college. The professor recited "Maud Muller" in a way that was a complete revelation to me. I have since then heard the greatest singers the world has contained, but never in hearing one of them have I had such a feeling of elation, of inspiration, such an opening of a new world, as on this occasion. It was like opening the eyes of a blind man. I returned to the study of literature with a zest to which I had previously been a stranger. I thoroughly believe in the practice of making children commit to memory many pieces of poetry and prose, largely as a mental discipline of high value, but also as an aid to literary appreciation. I should like to have a fine reader spend his time going from school to school, reciting some of the world's best literature, with appropriate comments. It would do more than all the text-books in existence.

Indeed, it will be seen that I have a high opinion of the peripatetic method, if you choose to call it so. All of us prefer the individual exposition to a mere reading. Crowds followed Dr. Mahaffy and Professor Ferrero last winter. So far as mere information is concerned, they could have received much more by getting books by these scholars at free libraries; but from them they never could have received the inspiration which comes from the spoken word.



If there were a dozen lecturers visiting each school, occasionally making use of moving pictures and lantern slides or of other illustrative material, I feel sure that children would not only be greatly interested, but that they would have things impressed on their minds in more definite fashion. If for each of these lectures there were furnished to the pupils a brief printed syllabus, the subject matter could be more firmly impressed and the lessons forever remembered. And what seems probable is that the children would be the means through them of giving their parents a good deal of information. This may seem like bringing the university method down from its high estate, but I have yet to discover why that which is good for grown men isn't good for adolescent minds.

I do not believe that it will be possible to expect vast improvement in our schools so long as the practice of cooping up restless children in school for five or six hours a day, compelling them to remain silent and quiet while fixing their attention on their books, is continued. The average man or woman would not do this; why should children be compelled or expected to do so? There is a tremendous amount of physical energy in a child, and it needs an outlet. Of course this means that classes must be smaller, but that must come in any event. It also means that we must inject into education, aside from those things which make for mere mental discipline, the elements of interest and profit. If the boy is learning something that is to be of practical use to him hereafter—I mean something which he can readily see is to be of immediate advantage—he will take more interest in his studies. In a few instances the girls now have sewing and cooking schools. They ought—every one of them—to have a thorough training in domestic economy. The crying defect of this age is that the average girl will learn only a smattering of the manifold and complicating details of housekeeping. She expects to marry a man who will be able to "hire a girl." Domestic servants now get wages which average—all things included—more than the average mechanic, and they are not, as a rule, well trained, but are wasteful and extravagant. The wife leaves most of the household management to the servants, not only because it is easier to do so, but because she does not know how to do anything else. It is like taking a track-layer and, without any preliminary training, making him superintendent of a railroad. The girls need to be trained to become better wives and mothers. At present they get in many instances almost no training, save some of a kind which is worse than none at all.



Take the city of Philadelphia, with its great army of mechanics: how many of them have received in school or out of it a proper training in anything but the use of a few tools? The reason they can do nothing else, or cannot rise above mediocrity, is because their education in school was limited to academic study of the most elementary kind, which did not fit them to think outside of a certain groove. Most of them left books at an early age to learn a trade in the ruthless school of experience. Those men ought to have been trained as mechanics in the schools along with their books in order that they might have emerged at eighteen or twenty as good workmen, men who were so trained that they need not spend their lives over a single lathe, or work for years making a single part of a machine which as a whole they have never beheld. Our education has been entirely too

much on paper, too much a matter of theory, and not one derived from experience.

Making a normal allowance for an increase since the last complete statistics were gathered, it appears that there are at present more than twenty million students in the schools of this country, of whom all but two millions are attending public schools. About seventeen millions are in the primary and grammar grades. The average daily attendance, however, is only a little in excess of twelve millions, and this includes sections of the country where the school term is from three to five months per year, so that the figures are not so impressive as they appear at first. Of the total enrollment about one-fourth is irregular in attendance. The average number of school days per year for the whole country is slightly in excess of one hundred and fifty, or about seven months.

To care for this army there are about five hundred thousand teachers in the public schools alone, and, naturally, by far the great majority are in the primary and grammar grades. Of this total almost four hundred thousand are women, the male teachers being almost exclusively in the higher grammar grades and in the high schools, save in the South, where the proportion of male teachers is in excess of that in the North. This means an average of about forty pupils for each teacher, although many have to care for more.

The most distressing fact in this whole connection is that only about one-third of the total number of children enrolled complete the grammar grades, while only about five per cent. go to the higher schools. Think for a moment what this means. It means that two-thirds of the men and women of this country have had no education in books beyond the most elementary rudiments; the average being the fifth or sixth grade, which the normal child should reach by the time it is eleven or twelve years of age. It is quite true that many of these children gain some additional education in other ways—through experience, self help, aid from others, persistent private study, and the like; but the painful truth is, they get nothing more at all save in the most haphazard fashion. Probably more than two-thirds of our population is unable to do the simplest sum in compound numbers or the rule of three. They are ignorant of everything except the very elements of geography, while most of them have no idea of history at all.

Now, the situation would not be so bad if they had at least carried from school a thorough drill in and mastery of the three R's, but that is not the case, as was shown in the previous article. For the unsatisfactory situation many causes have been noted, not the least important of which is the equipment of teachers. I shall discuss this and other phases of teaching as a profession in the succeeding article.

ON SOCIETY'S FRINGE

A REMINISCENCE

By Marion Hill

Author of "The Pettison Twins," etc.

WHY did They ruin a nice one? Why did They not pick out a *wet* day?—that is what you wanted to know. Why did They use up a fine afternoon with a fresh wind blowing—an ideal kite-day? As for Them, They were going calling. All right. Let Them. But by what fantastic stretch of the ever-fantastic adult imagination did They come to fancy that They needed you along?

You wanted to know other things too, all of the same burning importance, but you were entirely too clever to ask. You had found out by experience that a small boy who goes around with his ears shut and his mouth open is in a far worse predicament than he who goes around with his ears open and his mouth shut.

You listened hard while They pulled you out of your nice, limp play-clothes, washed a whole lot of your body which could not possibly show, and crowded you into your Sunday-suit, with a whit thing in the front of it which choked your neck and cut your throat every time that you turned your head. Taken separately, Mothers and Aunts are serious things to cope with; taken together, They are calamities. When permitted a choice you always selected your aunt. An aunt gets angry, especially when washing ears, but, lacking true motherliness, she does not slap with a soapy hand. This day you had Them both, so you forbade your tongue its usual gayeties, and took it out in grim thought.

If the call had to be, why, then, could not the maid have been deputed to pull up the stair carpet on a day when you could be on hand to assist? Take it all in all, there was no other family cataclysm from which you could manage to get more admirable adventure than from the upheavals incidental to the lifting of the stair carpet. Quite apart from the noisy joys of angering the worker by sitting on the very stair where her duty lay, and by—accidentally—kicking over her saucer of tacks (maimed, deformed, and diseased things of no possible future value, yet always religiously preserved, and always in a scarred saucer with a bite out of the rim), you had additional pleasures to expect from the treasure-trove sure to be imbedded in the cakes of dust.

Even though ungemmed with valuables, the very cakes themselves were of an interest not to be despised by the unjaded mind. To see particles of dust, which usually floated around singly in the sunlight and got in your eye or floated on your milk, assume a depressed and positively coagulated condition, adhering pathetically one to the other with blanket-like effect, appealed mysteriously to your scientific spirit.

And the things that hid in it! Once you had found the small blade of your penknife under the stair carpet, a discovery if not intrinsically valuable yet mentally priceless, clearing up a mystery of ages and recalling many historical events in danger of being forgotten,—those many contraband things you had successfully performed with that knife in its unmutilated and mutilated state before it had been taken away from you.

And now, by reason of this astonishing farce of a call, you would never know what riches the stairs gave up. A call! You and a call were a rare combination. As a rule, you were far from being in demand for social affairs, your company manners not being deemed safe, you being the victim of some wizard's accursed spell by reason of which you could not so much as point a finger at a strange lady's jug without its shedding a handle or sloughing off a spout. However, on this occasion you were to be taken along because the new people owned a little boy of about your own age, who had just convalesced from the mumps.

So the sight of you was to compensate for the lopsidedness of mumps, was it? Not if you could help it—not if your countenance could be made to convey the uncharitableness you felt.

Out on the street, being speeded on the hated way, you both looked and felt like a malefactor in the clutch of the law, for They put you in the middle of Them, their skirts seething around you with a rustle like tissue paper, and out of the left-hand rustle a hand would now and then stretch forth and cant your hat at an impossible angle, and out of the right-hand rustle a hand would slick your hair babyishly into your eyes, and then a left-hand voice would require you to show your hand-kerchief, and the right-side voice would tell you to "stop scuffing up the dust," so that liberty of thought as well as liberty of body was totally denied to you, and the robbery of the fair day was made complete.

It was nothing to Them then that your day was filched, and of course is less than nothing to Them now, but as for you your sense of utter loss has never been quite forgotten nor forgiven, and you remember anew with some of the old wistful feeling of wrong how woefully the friendly old earth cal'ed to you, how the free air taunted you to follow it, how cool, far vistas down tree-lined lanes coaxed your eager feet, how your distant comrades' voices—either raised in laughter or exciting altercation—beat like so many strokes of doom upon your exiled but answering heart.

To grown-ups an afternoon is but an afternoon, an insignificant day-remnant, a mere outfluttering rag belonging to radiant lengths of night; but to you, a school-afflicted, bed-going sufferer, an afternoon was the one joy-spot which haply flecked an otherwise dun existence. And afternoons did not come every day. No, indeed. For when you did not have to practise the piano, you were upstairs with chicken-pox, or with something else as stupidly harmless, meaning mere incarceration and segregation, without those bright fancy touches given by the dabs of jelly and dishes of pudding which are contributed by relatives to the more palpitating maladies. A whole afternoon was as rare as it was gracious. And to waste it on a call! You—an unwilling Curtius—sacrificed in the pool of the social whirl!

Arrived at the New People's door, you were so entertained to find out that it was opened by a colored man in church clothes that you tripped over a rug and clatteringly introduced yourself within the home by skating in on your nose. This blushingly painful accident, which should have awakened Their womanly sympathy, did n't. They treated it and you exactly as if you had planned the atrocity from the week before. Queer, but at the time you fell, somebody knocked over a pot of ferns. It could not possibly have been you, for you were not within a league of it; at least, your head was not. You could not quite answer for your feet. It was hard enough answering for your feet when those eccentric appendages were right beneath you, in plain sight. What they could or should do when they were up in the air and invisible behind you, is something you were too intelligent to make positive statements about.

The same hand (it had a motherly feel) which assisted you to rise was wise enough to maintain its grip on your collar till you were safely deposited upon a chair in the dim and gorgeous parlor.

A lot of things were hissed into your ear about your having "mortified everybody," but you could not give these reproaches much attention, being too busy tucking in fragments of your underclothes which had oozed out over your knuckles and knees during the late unpleasantness,—if anything was mortified, it was the end of your own nose.

The New Lady must have been told something circumstantial about her pot of ferns, for when she came in she looked at you exactly as if she knew facts of a hard nature concerning you. She had no son, mumpy or otherwise, in her wake; and, judging from the glance she gave you, it was evident she was no encourager of raw infancy, at least not on her parlor carpet. To be sure, she called you "a nice little man" and asked your "mother" how old her bright son was, but as she passed the question right over your parent's pleased head and addressed it instead to your disclaiming aunt, she did but make a

sorry affair worse all around. You knew just how little she thought of you. In those days you distinguished cordiality from convention even better than now. When one gets older and begins to grow fond of oneself, one becomes slow to think that others are n't pleased to death to see one: the general effect is of a wider charitableness, but the specific cause is enlarged self-esteem. Plainly the New Lady wished you in Jumping Jerusalem—but no more fervently than you wished yourself there.

Fortunately, conversation soon arose like a merciful wall to shut you out. Talk was something you were always banished from. With the classic spouter in the school-reader, however, you could truly ask, "Banished? What's *banished* but set free from daily contact with the things I loathe?"

To start the talk, They began with the weather. The Minister would come next, including derelict radii from the Sewing Circle,—then Hats. Then the Servant Girl would get a raking. Next would come Diseases and the various Insides that people reluctantly and surgically part with from time to time. Next would come Children, beginning, naturally, with Babies. With the topic of Children, the Mumpy Son would doubtless be produced. But you did not intend to bother about him until you saw him.

For a while you hugged to your quiet bosom "respite, respite and nepenthe," and eventually cheered to the extent of indulging in a musical creak, discreetly low, made by your heels over the chair rung.

The New Lady's ears got on to this melody at once and her glare immediately followed. Though the glare was cold, yet it made you burstingly hot, so that a rill of anguished perspiration trickled down your spine. The really sad part of the affair was the fact that you blithely grinned into the stony face of the chair-owner. Of course it goes without saying that you were in anything but a state of amusement. You grinned wholly because you knew that a grin was madly foreign to the entire situation. At the precise moment, too, when the muscles of your mouth widened into this damning thing, your arm jerked out at your side and your leg kinked up. These acrobatics were purely automatic: you were no more responsible than a dancing-jack on a string. This spiritual epilepsy was nothing new to you. You had noticed before that your soul when bruised always flew into an arm or a leg, and made that member do something in a hurry. The New Lady, not aware that these jerks were soul-manifestations, took them to be the result of impertinence or poor mental development, and she wished you further than ever. And, as before, you outdistanced her wish by miles.

Blessedly the suspended words trickled on,—"and the doctor had to take seven stitches; seven, my dear." Then you ~~know~~ you were re-

prieved for a minute or so. With your toes clinging to the chair-rung, with your back humped up till your ears were between your shoulders, with your arms battened to your sides, you rolled around your free eyes and took stock of the pictures on the walls. A good many of them were of ladies who were just out of the bath-tub and who stood on scraps of red velvet and examined their arms for their last vaccination. Though unusually interesting, these made nervous pictures for one to be caught looking at.

The safest thing on the walls was William Tell aiming at his son. You wondered much that the father should be made the hero of that episode. The father's part was puerile compared to the boy's. Fancy a child who had doubtless been all morning nibbling his father's cheeses or surreptitiously milking his father's goats,—or whatever *was* Swiss badness,—fancy such a guilt-soaked chap being brave enough to stand up as a target before a dead-shot father. Not big William but little William was the hero there.

At this point of your scholarly reflections you strangely found yourself in a heap on the floor. You could not explain it at the time, nor since, for the chair did not buck up against you, nor did anything explode in your insides. Yet there you were on the floor. They said you "tumbled," but there is an activity about the word totally inapplicable to your passivity at the time. Your mother and aunt looked apprehensively to see that you had cracked no seams in your Sunday-suit, the New Lady looked anxiously to assure herself that you had not frayed her carpet, no one seemed to realize that there was in their midst a humiliated, nerve-racked sufferer who needed to have thrown at him a funny word or a kind smile. Not a bit of it! They let you climb unaided back to your seat of misery. They acted as if you had insisted upon coming where you had been implored not to come—instead of the other way about,—as if They wanted to make you *sor.y* for your intrusiveness. You then and there registered a mental vow that the first principle of your manhood would be never to go visiting with the womankind of your immediate family.

When your anguished ears became capable of recording again the sounds of the outside world, you heard,—from the New Lady,—“Yes, he is the only boy. Oh, yes; he is quite well now, thank you. Want to see Clyde? Certainly. I'll bring him down.” She left the room.

Clyde! Great Canute, what a name! And “to bring him down” must have been a metaphor. If he was upstairs, he was only up one. The New Lady certainly lit on him in the hall, for she brought him right in. But not without a struggle. His alacrity was wanting.

After he had suffered at the hands of your relatives, he was steered towards you. You did all that you thought necessary,—you bared your unwilling teeth ~~at~~ him, hunched your shoulders another inch, and clung

a little tighter with your toe-tentacles to the chair-rung. But this proved to be insufficiently welcoming, for you were pried from your seat and made to mumble something and to shake hands with him. The insane things They did! To shake hands with a boy! To his credit be it said that the prank was as sickening to him as to you. You both acted as if the other's touch was leprous. Only your finger-tips made contact anyhow. And you tingled to wipe those finger-tips afterwards on your pants. "Clyde" was invited (by Them, of course) to sit near you, but he meritoriously backed to the opposite wall and stood bumping it rhythmically, meanwhile staring with blank oblivion past your left ear.

He had his interesting points. For instance, he wore a valuable ring. It was made of a well-sucked ham-bone,—that was not valuable, of course; you yourself had had ham-bone rings,—but it was lifted above the ordinary by the fact that it was ornamented with a precious stone of chewing-gum. This was an originality which filled you with envy. Why had you not thought of it for yourself? True, you were not supposed to chew gum. Still, the facts did not strictly bear out the supposition: you never chewed it out loud—that was all.

Feeling that you had to establish within yourself a compensating superiority to offset the gum, you began mentally to compose poetry around his name—which lent itself grandly.

Clyde died
Of a pain inside.

That was neat. That would do splendidly to shout over his back fence. But you could improve on it. Pegasus kicked gloriously within you, and with a cheering hitch in your chair you invented further—in sacred privacy, of course: you would not excite a mother's feelings for the world, not when she could get at you easily.

Clyde, oh, Clyde!
That time you lied.

Immense! It owned a positive quality of taunting accusation which would be bound to set Clyde asking himself, "*What time?*"

In spite of the Muse's companionship, you got very tired pretending that you did not see him any more than he saw you, and he certainly felt the same. You could almost hear his eyelids creak as he rested himself by switching his gaze from your left ear to your right, skipping over your face as if it had been left of 'the map.

The affair was supremely wretched and lasted for an unendurable time, and you could not derive the least interest from the talk They were still keeping up, for it was no longer new. They were conversationally campaigning by simply retracing the steps already taken, so as to arrive logically at the time to go. First, having worked

back to Maids, from Maids to Hats and Hats to Ministers, the talkers were at the Weather again and were rising for farewells.

You and Clyde having in common but the one clear, clean thought of escaping from the horrors of a parting shake, he melted from sight towards the back of his house, and you leaked thankfully past the colored man out into the blessed freshness of the front yard.

You drank the air. It was as fair water to a parched throat. Knowing that your freedom was but short, that They would soon have you in the rustling midst of Them and would be telling you how awfully you had behaved, you did the first *really* wrong thing you could see to do, without any finicky picking and choosing,—you hurled yourself upon the alien's gate and swung with blissful, callous heaviness upon its straining hinges. Every now and then you raised your head like a contentedly vicious alligator on a floating log.

Then full in your face came a clod of grass, with just enough dirt on the roots to get in your eyes and mouth. You knew that it had been sped by Clyde, and you quite admired the correctness of his aim and the shrewdness which had selected a missile which would scatter after striking, leaving you nothing handy to hurl in return.

Dropping to your feet, you were swiftly stooping to uproot one of his mother's geraniums, intending to use it as an answering compliment, when he disarmingly called to you to quit and come see his rabbits. You gracefully substituted a pebble for the geranium, threw it to show that you had tenacity of purpose, and were about to accept the invitation when you saw Them bearing down upon you.

Just before he dodged into sensible invisibility, you gave him the mystic sign in Masonry which means, "I'll arrive by the alleyway a little later on," then you resigned yourself to the inevitable.

Oh, yes; you got it all the way home. Queer tactics. Their method of trying to induce you to appreciate the flower of human companionship was to convince you that you were but a loathsome worm preying upon its petals. They wound up with the usual scarifying remark that when it came to a count of the full number of points which go to the making of a gentleman, you were found to be miserably lacking.

But this failed to rankle within you, for you were snug and warm at heart with the knowledge that you were on the road to make a new comrade. And, heavens, how near Society had come to raising its eternal barrier between you!

Slight indeed is the chance which cements or disrupts a union of kindred souls. For well you knew that if Clyde had not come out in the nick of time and fired a clod, you would never have yearned to know him, would never have wanted him to care for you, would never have determined to open for him your heart's chary door through which he was to enter in as king of your loyal liking.

THE LEGACY

By J. J. Bell

Author of "Wee Macgregor," etc.

PRECISELY as the five o'clock steamer passed the cottage, Mrs. McBean set the freshly-filled kettle on the fire. After a glance at the tea-table with its abundance of homely fare, she stepped across the kitchen to the window. Peter ought to be in sight immediately, and on this spring evening she was particularly anxious to catch a glimpse of his face ere he reached the cottage. Her right hand, browned and withered, was laid against the shutter as if for support; her left was pressed to her breast, whence came, as she heaved a sigh, a faint rustle of paper.

She hoped—she almost prayed—that her husband might return as cheerful of humor as he had left her that morning, when he had taken the steamer to Glasgow in order to receive payment of a legacy of two hundred and fifty pounds bequeathed to him by a cousin who, having made a small fortune in Canada, had died there, remembering at the last his old home and sundry of his old friends. She had smiled happily on Peter as he set out to catch the early steamer, bidding him hasten home again to assure her that the much discussed legacy was really a fact; and now she almost dreaded his return.

The kettle began to "sing," and she started at the familiar sound. Peter ought to have rounded the bend of the shore-road by now. Had he missed the steamer? Had he been stopped by some of the village gossips? It was not fair of him when he knew she was waiting to be assured that the money was real. . . .

"Haste ye, Peter," she murmured, and then remembered the paper at her breast. How a bit of flimsy paper with a few lines of writing can blight one's whole world of satisfaction!

Mrs. McBean gave a shiver, and her sight became blurred. When she had wiped her eyes she saw her husband. He came along briskly, jauntily for an old man to whom rheumatism was no stranger. He waved one hand and patted his chest significantly with the other. She waved also, and felt the paper in her bosom. She turned abruptly from the window. The kettle was boiling, and she was glad to have something to do.

Peter entered the kitchen, chuckling, and banged the door behind him.

"See what I was buyin', Marget!" he cried. "Ye'll be upsides wi' yer neebors noo!"

"Oh, Peter!" she whispered, staring at the small packet he had pushed into her hand. "Oh, Peter, what's this?"

"Look an' see!" he returned, with a great hearty laugh.

With awkward fingers she removed the white paper, uncovering a white box.

"Oh, Peter!" she whispered once more, and opened the box. It contained, resting on cotton wool, a big gold brooch set with a single amethyst, an old-fashioned ornament, but dazzling to her eyes. She said never a word.

"I was thinkin' it was time ye had a bit joolry forbye yer chain," said Peter pleasantly. "Hoo dae ye like it, auld wife?"

"Oh, Peter, ye're ower guid to me," she said, at last, striving to keep back the tears. "I wasna needin'—"

"D'ye no' like it?"

"Ay. I like it, but—but I dinna ken what to say to ye, Peter. I—I hope it didna cost an awfu' heap o' siller. But it—it's rale bonny, Peter; it's rale braw, an'—an' I'm that prood to get it. . . . Did—did it cost an awfu'—"

"Tits, wife! Never heed aboot that. If ye like it, that's an end to the story. I've aye wanted ye to ha'e as braw a brooch as Mistress Macadam, an' I believe I've got ye a braw'er! An' I brocht the money to let ye see it afore it gangs to the bank. Ye can coont it yersel' efter we've had wur tea? Is't near ready?"

"Jist ready. The money was a' richt, Peter?"

"Every penny. I've been blessin' puir Geordie a' the road hame."

"Ay; I wish Geordie could ken what he's done for us. . . . Sit down, Peter. Ye'll be hungry."

"Try on yer brooch, Marget."

"Oh, na, na. I'll keep it for the Sawbath."

"Try it on noo. Never heed yer auld claes."

As she fastened it at her neck, to please him, the paper under her bodice rustled, and her wet eyes grew fearful. But Peter was looking at the brooch.

"My! It suits ye fine! Keep it on till efter we've had wur meat," he said, and began to cut bread, while she poured out the tea.

A little later he noticed that she was eating nothing.

"What ails ye, wife?" he demanded. "Are ye no' weel?"

"I'm fine, Peter, I'm fine," she answered hurriedly.

"Ye're no' lookin' extra fine. Ye dinna look as if yer man

had come hame wi' twa hunner an' fifty pound in his pouch. Eh? Are ye no' pleased wi' yer brooch?"

"Aw, Peter, I'm pleased—I'm jist terrible pleased wi' ma brooch," she protested. "But, ye see, it was a—a terrible surprise to get it. Maybe that's the reason I'm no' hungry."

"An' ye've never speirt what adventures I had the day," he proceeded, after a long pull at his tea-cup. "A body wud think ye wasna heedin' aboot the siller."

"Oh, but I'm heedin' aboot it. Tell me yer adventures."

"I had nane," he said, with a hearty laugh. "It was a' as easy as A B C, an' the lawyer body parted wi' the cash as if it was dirt. I got it a' in five-pound notes, an' they'll gang to the bank the morn's mornin'. But I'll tell ye something that'll gar ye sit up, auld wife."

"What, Peter?"

"I've decided to retire frae business!"—this with another laugh. An inarticulate cry escaped the old woman.

"Dinna speak till I've tell't ye a' aboot it," said Peter. "Ye see, I've been thinkin' aboot retirin' since I first got word o' Geordie's legacy. I've been workin' hard for fifty year. . . . An' when I got the cash in ma haun' the day, I thocht aboot retirin' mair serious nor ever. An' when I got near hame the nicht, an' seen auld Jake Munro sittin' at his door, in his carpet slippers, smokin' his pipe an' readin' his paper, as happy as a king, wi' naethin' to bother him—I made up ma mind to follow his guid example, an' retire frae business as sune as possible."

"But, Peter—"

"Whisht, wumman! I'm no' feenished yet. As I was sayin', I've been thinkin' aboot it since I heard o' Geordie's legacy. Afore that I never had ony notion o' retirin'—till I couldna help it. But I've been calculatin', an' I see ma road clear. Wi' the siller we've got pit by, an' the legacy, an' what I could get for the nursery an' the tomato-hoses, there wud be plenty to keep you an' me as weel as we are the noo, as lang as we're spared. I wudna ha'e risked it wi'oot the legacy, but noo—weel, what think ye, Marget?"

She did not answer at once. She could not. Her simple mind was in a turmoil of warring thoughts. At last she managed to speak.

"Are ye no' weel, Peter? Are ye feelin' no' fit for yer wark?"

"I never felt better nor fitter. But I've been workin' hard for fifty year, an' I've as muckle richt to tak' it easy as ony man—as muckle richt as Jake Munro. As I cam' by I speirt at him hoo he liket daein' naethin'. He said he hadna enjoyed hissel' sae weel since he was a laddie."

With an effort the old woman said: "But Jake Munro has neither wife nor bairns to heed aboot. He's—"

"But did I no' tell ye there wud be plenty for you an' me, Marget? D'ye think I wud stop workin' if I wasna sure *you* wud be safe frae want?"

"Oh, Peter, ye ken I didna mean that. But——"

"An' the bairns need naethin' frae us," he went on in tones of satisfaction. "Thenk the Lord, they're a' daein' weel—every yin o' them, lad an' lass—especially John. 'Deed, wife, I'll no' be surprised if John does something han'some for us auld yins afore he's mony years aulder. I'm prood o' John. It's no' every young man that can start business on his ain account wi' his ain savin's. I'm thinkin' John'll stop at a single grocery shop—— What ails ye wife?" Peter stared across the table in alarm.

Marget's lips were moving without sound in a most piteous fashion; her hand clutched her breast. Peter did not hear the faint rustle of paper.

"What ails ye, dearie?" he cried, rising.

"Sit doon, Peter; sit doon, man," she contrived to mutter. "I—I'm better noo. Dinna be feart."

"But what was it?"

"Oh,—jist a bit pain; a—a——"

"Pain! Whaur was the pain?"

"I think it was in ma hert; but it's awa' noo. Dinna fash yersel'." She made a miserable failure of a smile.

"In yer hert!" His voice was full of dismay. "I best gang for the doctor——"

"Na, na. I tell ye I'm better."

But it took a long time to persuade him that she was. He was not wholly satisfied when, after tea, he set out to visit his nursery and tomato-houses.

"I'll no' be lang," he said kindly. "Sit doon an' rest ye, Marget. Maybe," he added, with an attempt at jocularity, "it's you that sud be retirin' frae business. But when I retire, I'll ha'e to help ye aboot the hoose."

Mrs. McBean tried to smile as he passed through the gate. Then she went back to the kitchen and tidied up, doing all the little chores methodically as was her wont, while now and then the paper in her bosom crackled softly. Everything being set in order and the hearth made bright, she seated herself in her accustomed chair and drew the paper from her bosom. It was a letter, and since its arrival in the morning, shortly after her man's departure, she had learned its contents almost by heart. She read it once more, but gained neither hope nor comfort from its pages. Unchecked, the tears ran down her face.

"What am I to dae?" she asked herself. "Hoo am I to tell

Peter? . . . Oh, I canna tell him; I canna tell him, an' him that prood an' happy."

She put her hand to her throat, for it hurt her, and came upon her husband's gift. How proud she would have been of the brooch a day ago! She unpinned it, and, rising unsteadily, put it safely away. And then she went back to asking herself what she was to do, and getting no answer. . . .

The clock struck eight, warning her that Peter would soon be home. Going to the window, she perceived him coming along the road. His step was less jaunty than it had been three hours earlier; still, he looked a cheerful old man.

Marget drew back from the window, the letter clutched in her hand. What was she to do? . . . In a panic she laid the letter on the table, and hurried from the kitchen and the cottage.

As she reached the open air she heard the tramp of her husband on the dry, sandy road. She slipped round a great rhododendron that almost filled one half of the small garden, and sank, all quaking, on a rough bench. It was dusk, and the air was growing chilly. She heard the click of the gate, the crunching of the gravel, Peter's heavy tread on entering the cottage. And she clasped her hands and prayed incoherently, while she saw agonizing visions of what was passing in the kitchen. She had always feared her husband a little: she knew that he could be stern, severe, hard; that of all things he hated failure, and found failure on the part of others most difficult to forgive. She had no hope that he would forgive, much less help, in this case. Her small world with all its simple joys had fallen about her ears. She sat there awaiting the worst.

Peter found the letter on the table.

"Frae John," he said to himself. "What wey did she no' tell me? . . . Marget!" he called.

Without waiting for her answer, he sat down eagerly to read it, peering at it in the dusk rather than waste a moment in lighting the lamp. After all, there was sufficient light for bad news.

He gave a gasp, and then his face became set and merciless. He read through the letter—it was not long—that told how his eldest son, in whom he had taken so much pride, was in desperate straits for lack of money. John wrote the dismal tale of how he had attempted too big a business on too small a capital; of how his customers delayed paying their accounts while his creditors would wait no longer for theirs; of how it would take the impossible sum of three hundred pounds to save him from bankruptcy. A commonplace tale—when it does not come too near home.

Peter McBean read his son's letter a second time, without any

relaxation of his rugged old features. He turned it over to read it a third time, but now the light failed him. He dropped it on his knee and sat motionless. Nearly an hour went by.

"Marget," he called.

Out in the garden she heard her name, and shuddered. Perhaps it was well that she made no response at all.

Five minutes passed. The fire had burned low.

"Marget!" he called again, and there was no softening in his voice.

But all of a sudden the question smote him—where was his wife? The memory stabbed him. She had not been well at tea-time. . . . If anything were to happen to Marget—

He got up, coughing loudly. Groping across the almost dark room, he whispered her name. He opened the door of the seldom-used parlor. . . . Not there.

"Marget," he said unsteadily.

He went out to the gate and peered up and down the road, feeling strangely helpless. He was in the midst of silences, save for the slow, melancholy wash of the water on the beach below where he stood. Fear leaped upon him.

"Ma Marget," broke from his lips, involuntarily, all but soundlessly. "Whaur are ye?"

A slight noise reached his ears. . . .

He came upon her in her retreat before she was aware. She was on her knees on the cold grass. . . .

And his eyes were opened, so that in the bowed, shrunken figure he beheld the old woman who still toiled bravely for his comfort, the woman who had borne him sons and daughters, the woman he had courted long ago—so long ago. And her agony in the little garden was less, though longer, than his. . . .

She realized his presence and tried to rise. He helped her to her feet and kept his arm round her, for she seemed about to fall.

"Marget," he said hoarsely, "ye maun gang an' see John first thing the morn's mornin'. Tak' him this"—he pressed a softish packet into her hand—"an' tell him—tell him his fayther'll no' see him beat. Tell him that, wife. An' tak' guid care o' what I've gi'ed ye."

"But what is 't, Peter?" she stammered.

"Oh, jist the legacy; jist the legacy," he replied, with a queer laugh.

"Oh, Peter, Peter, ma guidman Peter!"

"Whisht, auld wife! . . . Ye—ye wasna the only yin to ha'e a pain in yer hert. . . . Come ben the hoose, or ye'll be gettin' yer daith o' cauld."

Presently they entered the cottage together.

A SECOND ADAM

By Thomas L. Masson

Author of "The Von Blumers," "A Corner in Women," etc.

I SAW those bananas, and I fell.

Of course at that moment I did n't know that I was falling.

One never does at the time.

I was on my way to the Cragtons'. Cragton had taken it into his head to invite me down to their country place. He called it a box. As a matter of fact, it had cost him a couple of millions. He had everything in it that you can imagine, and a flock of servants. I found this out afterwards, although before I had only suspected it.

Mrs. Cragton was a splendid person. She was the thing known as a "leader." Her position depended upon the manner in which she carried everything off, and she knew how.

I took along my trunk, packing into it all the dress suits I had in the world—which was one—and all the dinner clothes—which was also one. I also carried in my hand a leather hand-bag of voluminous proportions. The only objection to it was that it was too new. I wanted to buy some European labels to put on it, but I did n't have time.

The train was late getting to Cragton's place, and I had rushed off from the office with only a bite to eat. At four o'clock we stopped in front of those bananas. There was a railway station there, a news-stand, and other accompaniments. But the only thing that I saw was those bananas, reposing peacefully on a peanut stand.

An Italian lady named Eve presided. She smiled, I hesitated, and then I fell—looking stealthily around to see that no one knew me. It is n't quite the thing, you know, especially if you know such grand people as the Cragtons, to eat fruit in public. The vulgar fact that Adam did it does not make a precedent in this instance.

I bought three—for ten cents. Eve put them in a bag for me. I stole back into my seat in the train, which immediately started.

In the presence of my Maker—although I did n't realize this at the time—I ate one of those bananas. Then I ate another. And I was satisfied, and ashamed.

No one saw me. Friends of the Cragtons don't, as a rule, travel by train—they have their own motor-cars. So I was apparently safe.

Now, the whole affair might have ended there if it had n't been for that third banana. My fall would have been only a matter between myself and my Maker, and hence no harm would have come of it.

But I insisted on putting that third banana back into the paper bag, and depositing it in my grip. I hid it cautiously under a glorious array of cravats.

Why, I wonder, do great criminals always leave the inevitable loop-hole? Why do they always leave some evidence of their crime?

There was no reason why I should have saved that banana. At the Cragtons' there was plenty of nourishment. But my frugal nature asserted itself at the wrong moment—and I saved that banana.

The motor-car met me at the station. The third assistant chauffeur placed my grip in front. We sped away to the mansion house.

There the butler passed me on to other functionaries. Eventually I reached my room on the second floor.

I locked the door cautiously. I was just beginning to realize that I had a banana on my hands. I looked around for some place to conceal it.

There was a knock at the door. The house valet had arrived. With him came my trunk.

This gentleman—he fully deserved the title—graciously indicated that he was there for a purpose. This purpose was to accoutre me in my clothes.

He unstrapped my trunk, and then reached for my grip. Horrors! In another instant he might have discovered that banana. I should have been ruined.

He would undoubtedly have spread the news. From the servants' hall it would have gone to the housekeepers, and thence to the family and the guests. I already saw the look of kindly contempt on the butler's face.

"No, no!" I exclaimed, making a wretched attempt to convey the impression that the grip contained government bonds. "Just wait a moment." I hurried the grip into the wardrobe. I groped among those cravats. I dragged that reluctant banana forth in the dark, and pushed it into a far corner.

"You may proceed," I announced, triumphantly emerging.

My action rather excited the valet's respect than otherwise. Evidently it is quite *en règle*, among the best people, to conceal something.

The dinner, and the evening, finally wore away. I came out very well at Bridge, and had an opportunity meanwhile to examine the premises.

My idea was to get up early in the morning, steal out, and remove that banana to a place of safety. Beyond the lawn was a box hedge. Beyond that was a rolling country.

I arose at five. The sun had come up, and all was still. I reconnoitred. Everything seemed propitious for the adventure.

I dressed hastily, determining beforehand, in case I was observed, to say that I was in the habit of early rising. This was peculiar, but an eccentricity not to be condemned.

Carefully concealing the banana in the inside pocket of my coat, and carelessly carrying my stick in my hand—as if this were the regular thing with me—I strolled slowly down the dark hall. There was no one in sight.

I reached the stairs and descended.

I opened the door. I stood forth on the piazza.

Suddenly I saw, over the hedge, a head. Then, not far away, another.

I realized instantly that I was surrounded by a cordon of gardeners.

There appeared to be gardeners everywhere. Two of them were quietly rolling the lawn. Others were trimming flower-beds.

That was Cragton's scheme for keeping his place in order without effort. Nothing apparently was ever done to it. In reality, it was always done when the guests were asleep.

I saw instantly that it was no use. I could n't pass the line without being seen. To attempt to conceal that banana anywhere within a radius of miles would mean ultimate disclosure.

And so, deploying about the piazza for a moment, I retreated to my headquarters.

There, in the light of early morn, I examined that banana.

It was not so robust as it was. It was slowly but surely losing its vigor. In a short time—I sniffed incontinently. I could no longer conceal the fatal truth. Its presence could be detected in other ways than by touch and sight.

And the worst of it was that every moment its condition grew worse.

It was dying by inches.

At last a solution came—born of desperation. I carefully removed the peel, and placed the outside habiliment in a remote corner of the carpet. No servant would ever find it there. As for the banana, a happy thought came. I reached for my sponge-bag, placed the banana inside of it, and drew the tape close. Then I triumphantly placed it in my rear pocket.

There was to be a motor trip that morning, and I hoped that the favorable opportunity might present itself for me to throw the banana overboard.

Cragton had asked me out for a spin in his runabout. He seemed, somehow, to be rather fond of me, and confided the fact that there were times when he liked to get away from everybody.

"We'll be alone," he had whispered, "and enjoy ourselves."

At eleven o'clock we started. I could feel that banana oozing around. But the sponge-bag was the best quality of rubber, and I had no fear.

Cragton ran the car. He did it occasionally, he said, just for the excitement.

Twenty miles away, we were going up a steep hill, on the low gear. Suddenly there was a sharp grinding. On top we stopped.

"Now," exclaimed Cragton, "what the deuce do you suppose is the matter?"

He took off the hood, and peered into the machine. Then he turned over the engine.

I heard him swearing softly to himself.

He looked up at last.

"What do you suppose is the matter?" he cried.

"Have n't the least idea," I replied calmly.

"Why, that infernal idiot of a chauffeur has n't put a drop of lubricating oil into the gear-box. If we keep on we'll grind the car to pieces."

I rose.

"You mean," I said, with trembling voice, "that soft, soggy, mushy stuff that comes in a tin box?"

"Certainly. That's it."

I smiled triumphantly. Was ever anything so slippery as a banana? It had a reputation the world over.

I reached for my sponge-bag.

"Here, old man," I said. "Put this in. It's the very best quality."

Cragton examined it. Without a word, he opened the gear box and dumped it in. Then he turned to me as he cranked her up.

"How in Heaven's name," he exclaimed, "did you happen to have it?"

And I replied nonchalantly:

"Why, my dear fellow, I always carry it along with me when I go on a motor trip."



THE PROOF

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

I F your life's an open book,
Never from men's eyes aloof,
Do not fail with care to look
For the errors in the proof!

THE TUG THAT STOOD BY

By John Trevor Custis



TWO vessels collided just outside the capes. One was a powerful liner on her way to port, the other a wooden freighter, bound Heaven knows where.

The steel bow of the liner tore a great hole in the other's side, and there was no chance of saving her. The commander of the liner, in immaculate uniform and brass buttons, very gallant and grave, gave orders that the crew of the miserable freighter should be transferred at once to his own vessel, to be taken to port in safety.

Only the captain of the little tramp freighter remained with the doomed craft. That grim tradition of the sea which demands that the captain shall remain until the ship is about to go down held him there, stern-faced and immovable.

"Lively now," shouted the commander of the liner. "No use staying there, man. It's only a matter of an hour or two. Come aboard quick if you're coming at all."

The captain of the freighter turned but a second toward the other. "Go to thunder!" he shouted back.

The commander of the liner, grinning good-naturedly, told the ship-news reporters of the incident, when he reached the dock next day. "Had his nerve with him," he said. "Knew he could n't save his boat, but he stayed any way. He's the right sort. I'd be sorry if he lost out. But he's safe, I guess. We had to get into port, but when we left him a tug stood by, ready to take him off before his boat went down."

In the great life-tragedy of the universal sea, while the night lasts, and later, when the first gray streaks of dawn appear, disclosing with terrible exactness the wreck that the night has wrought, I want to be the captain of the tug that stood by.

Perhaps my vigil shall be wasted. Perhaps some great ocean liner, sweeping majestically after her mate to port, will stop her giant screw and take off the captain of the tramp freighter.

Perhaps when he reaches the deck he will turn and wave me farewell. More likely he will swoon with weariness and relief, and will not even see the face of the man on the tug that stood by. It matters not.

I do not want to be the commander of either of those great liners. Nor do I crave the pitiful glory of the man who was willing to go down with his ship. I want only to cast anchor again and disappear from the scene of the wreck, where no man knows and no man cares.

For I shall know—and none else need know—that through the night, his back to the mast and his burning eyes turned to the stars, the derelict knew I was there. Consciously or subconsciously, he knew I was waiting in the darkness for his call.

He did not call. He never learned my name. But when the sunlight of another day shall dispel the fearsome shadows of his night, he will remember. He will give thanks to the Master of the Waters for the tug that stood by.



A CAT'S TALE

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

NOW, in my mistress' lap I lay,
A happy ball of purr,
When in there came a haughty dame—
I loathed the look of her.
She stood and said, "I hate all cats"
(Those were her very words).
"I'd rather live with mice and rats
Than lose our singing birds.

"All cats are cruel to the core.
They do not need to be
By hunger stirred to kill a bird;
They do it wantonly.
I really can't endure a cat."
Just then I made a spring
And landed on that lady's hat
And seized a flaming wing.

I tore the stuffed bird from her head
(You should have heard her roar).
I growled and spit and clawed and bit
And strewed it on the floor.
My mistress cried, "Oh, what a shame!"
But winked one eye at me,
And said unto the angry dame,
"You do love birds, I see."

HER HEART'S DESIRE

By Sarah Chichester Page

DO you know anything about the Baconian Trimetrical Cipher? Well, it's a great thing, when you have time to read it all, and tells you the most astonishing pieces of news. But we undertook it at the wrong time of the year.

In our Reading Club we were having a course of Shakespeare, and it was Bessie Barksdale's time to lead. She said she was tired of Shakespeare—did n't altogether believe in him; and, any way, she was determined to make her lead a little different from the others. So she wrote to Boston to ask a friend to send her down the books about the Trimetrical Cipher, which somebody told her was all the rage there. And, though surprised at her boldness, I promised to help her out; for really I thought the Baconian Trimetrical Cipher was the best sounding name I'd ever heard for a lead.

We supposed that when we got the books we'd have time to read them and find out what it meant. But, as it happened, the Hunt Club met in the neighborhood of The Sycamore that week, and Billy Barksdale gave the Hunt Breakfast the very day before the Reading Club. And you know how long it takes to get books down from Boston! So, as I was helping with the breakfast, we were rushed to death.

Bess had the books first—three very big ones. And while I was cutting the sandwiches at home she kept calling up on the telephone:

“Betty, there are the most *extraordinary* things in this book you ever dreamed of in your life!”

“What are they?”

“Goodness! I could n't tell you over the telephone.”

“You don't mean—improper?”

“My dear, *perfectly awful!* Really, you never did imagine such things!”

“Why, what are we going to do about it?”

“Goodness knows! It seems to me the whole British Empire is shaken to its foundation. I don't know what to think. Can't you get your horse and come over?”

“And leave these sandwiches? You know I could n't. How many will you need?”

“Oh, about a thousand, I reckon; the whole county is coming.

We've got three turkeys to be baked in the stove before night, and two hams now boiling on top."

After another fifteen minutes:

"Betty, it's I. I simply can't stand it. This book is telling the most outrageous things you ever heard, and there's not a soul in the house for me to talk to, and you *must* come. Are n't you nearly done with the sandwiches?"

"Not half. Won't Billy come home soon?"

"Yes, but Conway Nelson will be with him, and I could not possibly speak of this before a man; at least, it sounds like that to me!"

"Why, Bess, it's English History and Literature, and you know men taught us that at school. What on earth are you talking about? You'll kill me dead if you keep on like this."

"You just wait till you read these books! I'm absolutely prostrated; and there's not the slightest doubt of its being true. This woman has read every single word of it in the plays, herself, by Bacon's own Cipher. Oh, Betty, I'm dying for you to hear it! Did you know Francis Bacon was a King of England?"

"Oh, *do* shut up!"

But as the evening wore on I heard more and more spasmodic fragments over the 'phone; and, finally, that Conway and Billy were wildly excited over it, too, and all of them were sitting up very late, reading it aloud.

Conway Nelson was my cousin. There had also been a slight attack of love between us; but that was over now—we had discovered the mistake in time—and I was particularly anxious to transfer him to Bessie Barksdale. They were crazy about each other—I knew it well; but they had some mistaken idea of loyalty to me which made them shy. At least, *she* had: I never knew a man to have scruples of that sort.

He was at the Barksdales' stable the next morning early when I drove in with the sandwiches; and as soon as he had fastened my horse he began: "And just think, Betty, that we've all been believing this old fable about Shakespeare all our lives! The world has been perfectly willing to swallow the absurdity that an ignorant hanger-on at play-houses wrote such plays as those! And here, in a single night, this little girl explodes the whole business, and shows up the fraud in the plainest way."

"Who?" I gasped in bewilderment. "Oh, you mean Bessie, of course!"

"And she so young—a mere child!" (She is six months older than I am!) "And so modest! You'd never know from her she had done anything at all. Why, Betty, I should think *you* might have suspected something. You were reading Shakespeare when I was up

here last winter. And about the history part—well, I never did have any use for red-headed old maids; although, of course, Queen Elizabeth turned out not to be an old maid. And think of Miss Bessie finding out that the whole English royal line is a fraud! I tell you, there 'll be a waking-up in this old county to-morrow!"

And all the time we were creaming the oysters Bess was pouring out the wonderful story of how Francis Bacon had written every single thing that was published in England at that time. Also that he and several other prominent people seemed to be sons of Queen Elizabeth, who was supposed to have married Leicester in the Tower. What with the celery giving out, and the people pouring in at nine o'clock, ravenous from the morning air; and the difficulty of getting them all fed at once, I really could not take in for a while what it all meant. The dining-room was rather narrow, and we found there was such a crowd we had to lay two long tables beside each other; which made it impossible to walk between, when all were seated; and the necessary serving was done through the long windows.

I sat next Miss Cornelia Grayson, a very enthusiastic member of the Reading Club. It was her first Hunt Breakfast, and the hilarity was a little startling to her.

"Do you think, Betty, these breakfasts are quite—elevating?" she inquired carefully.

"Not often, but sometimes, Miss Cornelia," Billy Barksdale helped me out.

At that moment Judge Randolph, coming in late and seeing a vacant seat at the head of the table and no room to walk to it, had dived under, unnoticed in the general vivacity; and, crawling the whole length of the room, came to the surface just at Miss Cornelia's knees. She started violently, and I'm sure she thought it strange, but she said nothing. And, to divert her attention, I rushed headlong into the Baconian Trimetrical Cipher. At the first word Bessie leaned forward and broke in:

"Miss Cornelia, we've found out the most remarkable things! Bacon really did write all the Shakespeare plays, and the 'Faerie Queen,' and—"

"Then, why under the sun did n't he put his name to them?" I ventured.

"Because he was Queen Elizabeth's son, and so was Essex, and—"

"Madam—Miss Bessie," snorted Mr. Carter, pushing his chair back against the wall with a bang—"are you aware you are speaking of the Virgin Queen of England? And such a decided virgin, madam, that the whole of our State was called for her—Virginia! I beg your pardon, ladies, but I must say I think your Reading Club is taking wonderful liberties. Most corrupting—contaminating—libellous!"

"Merciful heavens, Mr. Carter!" bristled Miss Cornelius. "Are you alluding to the Ladies' Reading Club, conducted on the most unexceptionable lines; every author thoroughly expurgated——"

"Well, madam, I have only to say that you are treating an absent maiden lady most damnably; and Robert Carter is not the man to let it pass unchallenged."

"But, Mr. Carter," wailed Bessie, almost in tears, "we really meant no disrespect to Queen Elizabeth. She was married to Leicester, you know."

"Look here, Mr. Carter—I beg your pardon, sir," Conway rushed to Bessie's rescue—"Miss Bessie is explaining to you the Earl of Leicester's marriage to Elizabeth."

"The thunder you say! Then where the deuce does Amy Robsart come in? No, sir! I call on all the members of this Hunt Club to assist me in protecting our innocent young girls from the pernicious influence of these Ciphers;" and, wiping his eyes with his red silk handkerchief, he tried to rise, but there was not room to get his knees from under the table.

I surely was glad the M. F. H. sounded his whistle to mount just then. And, after a few more stirrup cups, which they certainly did not need, even the old staggers followed out.

As we rode home after the hunt—the Barksdales, Conway, and I—Bessie could talk of nothing but her Cipher. She was very beautiful in her habit: a gypsy face with scarlet lips; and little rings of red black hair lifting from her forehead as she rode. And Conway was wearing his pink for the first time, and it suited him well.

"I wish I had not followed to-day," she told him. "I should have had a much more interesting time reading the Cipher."

"Good gracious, Billy!" I gasped, riding behind them. "Did you suppose anything could make her regret this run?"

Conway, who had ridden wonderfully and had the time of his life, on a splendid new hunter, looked at her adoringly.

"I was afraid you were bored," he said; "and the worst of it is, you will be too tired to study any more to-night."

"Oh, Betty has the books to-night, you know. I certainly shall enjoy them when I can sit down quietly and absorb the whole strange story."

"You'll let me in on that, won't you?" he asked her eagerly. "I might help you with the references, you know." But she glanced anxiously in my direction, and began begging me to come in to supper, with an unusual amount of devotion. When I could n't, Conway rode home with me to carry the books. But neither their fascinations nor mine prevented his returning to The Sycamores for supper. He said he was afraid Bessie felt nervous about appearing in public with such

a remarkable subject. She was going to write her paper to-night, and the strain might be too much, after the fatigue of hunting in the morning.

I reminded him the run had been unusually short, and Bess was used to being in the saddle; but he said he did n't believe I at all appreciated what she was doing, and what a splendid intellect she possessed. Maybe I'd see to-morrow what other people thought of her! *Conway* teaching *me* to appreciate Bessie Barksdale!

She certainly had n't much time to prepare a paper for the Club; and she was to preside.

The club met for only an hour and a half; and some time was devoted to the minutes of the last meeting. Then Mrs. Burwell read a long paper about Shakespeare, with many quotations from various plays. Miss Cornelius Grayson next read a paper on Bacon, and told us when he was born, and how superior to Shakespeare he was in every way. This took more than an hour. Then Bess began her nice paper introducing the Cipher theory.

She was so excited, she read it very fast. She thought there would be a great opposition, and felt rather frightened at what she might bring down on her head; though it seemed to me very few of the ladies were noticing what she was reading. But when she presently got to: "Bacon used the Cipher to conceal the history of his birth in his writings, because his mother, Queen Elizabeth, had threatened him with death should he divulge it," Mrs. John Thomas Harding laid down Mr. Harding's trousers she was ripping up, and lifted her hand.

"Stop right there, Bessie Barksdale, and let us know what you are driving at."

"Why, it's Francis Bacon, you know; and this woman has found out that he wrote all the plays attributed to Shakespeare and Spenser, and Burton's—"

"And do you believe that tommy-rot?"

"Yes, indeed, I do, Mrs. John Thomas; and so does Conway Nelson—though I'm bound to confess he never heard of Bacon before!"

"I reckon not indeed—that boy!—that is, not out of the meat-house!"

Then Bess finished her paper, and, according to the usual proceedings, asked the members for an opinion.

"Mrs. Stevens, will you tell us what you think about the Baconian Cipher?"

Mrs. Stevens, who had been showing a new crochet stitch to Mrs. Lee, looked up hurriedly, and said:

"I really have not read the book, Bessie. You know I never did

care for light fiction; and the modern novel, in my opinion, is perfect trash, and unfit for a serious mind."

Mrs. Lee, when asked, made her picot triumphantly, and then answered hastily: "Really, I did n't catch the name of the book. But in pickling time I just never attempt to keep up with the Club. Besides, I really thought we were still on Shakespeare."

Miss Maury faltered: "I thought it was lovely, and very interesting. I remember I read the whole thing in one of Scott's novels—I can't recall which it was."

And right here the church-bell rang for Wednesday evening service, and everybody rose and folded up her sewing.

"What play was this Bessie was discussing? I did n't catch the name," one lady was asking, as we filed down the steps.

"It was a new one to me; but I'm tired to death of them, and did n't pay much attention. Were you at the Hunt breakfast yesterday? They say it was perfectly scandalous. Wait, and I'll walk around to church with you. I'm dying to hear about it."

Bess was entirely speechless with indignation when she climbed into my trap, to drive home with me.

"Why, Betty, I don't believe they took it in at all! I don't believe they care a bit *who* wrote the plays!"

"I doubt if they do, my dear;" and I tried to comfort her about the short time she had had to convince them. But she refused to be comforted.

"And Conway thought it was all so plain, and so wonderful," she sighed.

"He thought *you* were so wonderful! Bess, don't you see he is perfectly devoted to you?"

"Of course not! He never has loved anybody but you. He said the other day you were the most brilliant girl he ever knew. And I thought—that was the reason I sent for these horrid old cipher things: I did so want him to think me clever. And now—"

"My dear, he is crazy about your cleverness. Why, Bess, can't you see it's all coming right? And you will both be so happy! Promise me you will be happy;" and I drew her close to me, and really meant it, with all my might.

"And you are sure, Betty, *absolutely sure* you would n't hate it?"

"*Hate* it!" I gaily mocked her. "Have n't I been moving heaven and earth for it? Ah, my dear, it's the desire of my heart!"

I came mighty near telling her I had been miserable over making Conway unhappy; but it did n't seem appropriate, so I stopped in time. She never noticed it, for there stood Conway waiting for us at the gate of The Sycamores.

Bess jumped down, and began telling her grievance in a fine jumble.

"Do you mean to tell me, Betty," and he glared at me with indignation, "that those women did n't believe what Miss Bessie read them about Francis Bacon?"

"I think the trouble was, they did n't seem to take it in. You know they have n't seen the books——"

"Betty"—very sternly—"do *you* believe Francis Bacon was a rightful king of England and wrote all those plays?"

"Why, Conway, you see, I'm so fond of Shakespeare, I really could n't give him up all at once; and——"

"Do you believe it, or do you not?"

"Well, you see—I read a passage at the back of the book, where the Shakespeare club waited upon this Bacon lady, and asked her to read some Cipher for them; but she said she could n't do it right offhand, because a good deal of it had to come to her by intuition; and I *did* think that sounded a little doubtful——"

"Oh, *Betty!*" Bess cried reproachfully, and she sobbed outright.

At that, Conway gave me one withering look of contempt, and said scornfully:

"And you saw the books—and heard Miss Bessie explain it in full! Well, Betty, I must say I thought you had brains!" and he followed Bess—both of them forgetting to say good-night.

They went toward the orchard stile: he leaning over her, and talking earnestly. And as I drove round the orchard on the short cut home, I distinctly saw them through the trees. They were at the stile. He held her hands, and as I looked he bent his head down to her——

I drove home very fast, and I felt mighty queer. And when I got my hat off, I folded my arms on my dressing-table and looked at myself in the glass a long time.

"Yes, she is prettier than you, of course; and she's much nicer, or she could never have been your best chum for all these years. But cleverer? No, indeed, I'm not going to give up that too! And now you've got your 'heart's desire,' and where are you? That's exactly like heart's desires!"



THE ALTRUIST

BY MAHLON LEONARD FISHER

WHAT though skies were long o'ercast?—
Come, share with me this bit of blue!
What though the loaf be lessening fast?—
Here, Egoist, half is for you!

THE BIRTH OF A KING

By Jane Belfield

Author of "The Heart of Paprika," etc.



UP the long, straight street they came—four friars walking abreast, carrying a long, black pole, in the centre of which hung the bell that at every step tolled with dismal prescience—the toll to execution.

The overhanging balconies on Magdalena Street were filled with sympathetic onlookers, and an indignant crowd thronged the sidewalk. Small boys climbed the trees, slid down as the procession came in sight, and bent to look with morbid curiosity into the face of the prisoner.

The condemned man followed the Capuchins, walking between two lieutenants of his own regiment—a tall, red-cheeked, sturdily built, blue-eyed soldier. The brass buttons bearing the arms of Spain had been severed from his uniform. About his temples a white handkerchief was bound. A soldier followed the prisoner—the barrel of his gun pointing to the ground.

Then four men—sharpshooters, none of whom knew in which of the guns slung across their shoulders was lodged the fatal bullet. A band of drums followed, beating the Spanish tattoo to the gallows; then came infantry, cavalry, artillery—all marching beneath the skies of sunny Valencia to the Campo Raso at the foot of San Miguel Castle. For this was Sebastian Salguero, who for love of Farruca, the little potato-digger on the farm lying near his native town of Lugo in Galicia, had slain his sergeant.

A stranger in the crowd—from his dress an Englishman—gazed with astonishment at the waiting throng stirred to a very ecstasy of compassion at sight of the prisoner.

As women upon the balconies leaned far over the rails, frantically waving their fans and handkerchiefs, the condemned looked up and smiled. To him every face reflected the love of Farruca. They could not applaud this man on his way to death, but they could weep for him.

The stranger turned to a man by his side, who in grave silence and with folded arms was watching the procession.

"What is this?" the Englishman asked in broken Spanish. "If the man is a hero, why do they shoot him?"

The Spaniard turned, his black eyes flashing. "It *is* a crime, Señor—to slay this man. It is a blot upon the escutcheon of romantic Spain. Has not the Señor heard his story?"

"No. I arrived in Valencia but yesterday."

"The papers are full of it. *El Imparcial de Madrid* strongly condemns the execution. All Spain sympathizes, but can do nothing. The man was drafted in Lugo. Does the Señor know how that is done? No? Well, I shall tell you. There are a number of gutta-percha balls thrown in a basket—Spain goes black when she goes to war. In the centre of these balls a hole is bored, and on a folded script inserted in the hole two numbers are printed—the number of the regiment and the company. Two little girls dressed in red and yellow, standing by stacked bayonets, shake the contents of the baskets as each soldier thrusts in his hand. By their side a second lieutenant directs the conscription."

"And is there a number hidden in every ball?"

"No, Señor; some of the balls are blank. But Sebastian Salgueiro did not draw a blank. He was obliged to leave the farm and Farruca, his sweetheart, and follow his regiment to Valladolid. But—and here comes the story—in the girl's family there was an old silver spoon presented to her grandmother by the Countess de Morelos. Farruca gave this highly prized heirloom to her lover to use at mess instead of the regulation tin spoon with which the soldiers eat from their two-handled dishes. . . . But will the Señor come with me? The infantry have passed, and the execution takes place at sunset before San Miguel."

The Englishman turned his steps in the same direction.

"You may imagine, Señor, how the soldier prized this precious relic. But one day, as he sat at mess in front of the barracks, eating with two of his comrades—the Señor knows the soldiers stack their bayonets, three together, and eat in groups of three?—the sergeant of Sebastian's company drew near and reprimanded the soldier for eating with this spoon instead of the regulation spoon of tin. High words followed; the sergeant taunted the man, seized the silver spoon, broke it in two, and threw the pieces in the face of Sebastian. The hot-blooded youth sprang to his feet, pointed his fusil, and shot his officer dead."

"But, owing to the circumstances, could not appeal be made?"

"Farruca went to the family of the Countess who had given the spoon, and every effort was made in high places to obtain a pardon; but military law could not be set aside—the man had killed his officer."

"Under provocation. Could not the king pardon?"

"The Señor knows there is no king—Alfonso has been six months dead. But, Señor, we have arrived."

The procession had reached the Campo Raso on which the soldiers drilled. The flag above the fortress of San Miguel was at half-mast. Before the wide entrance of its octagonal barracks stood a sentinel in black and red. The regiment formed in a square, the prisoner towering in the centre. The condemned man cast his eyes proudly over his comrades' heads towards the crowd of enthusiastic men and weeping women who had followed him to this place; and as his gaze met the eager, peering face of an urchin thrust out from the branches of a tree, he smiled.

"When will they shoot him?" the Englishman asked, with evident sympathy.

"At sunset. Hush, Señor. They are granting Sebastian one last request—it is the custom."

"What does he ask? Can you hear?"

"Yes; he takes the broken pieces of the silver spoon from his breast. 'Give these to Farruca,' he says. Ah, Señor, will nothing interfere?"

The four friars ceased singing the *De Profundis*; the confessor held the Crucifix to the man's lips. They bandaged his eyes and turned him towards the wide expanse of sunlit sea below the cliff.

"He will not turn his back!" his guide cried excitedly to the Englishman. "He says he is not a traitor—but—they make him! *Puñetas!* They *make* him!"

An officer advanced—a sword in one hand and a handkerchief in the other—and took his stand at the prisoner's side. The four sharpshooters stepped into position. The drums beat the final tattoo. A moment more and the round red orb of the sun would drop below the horizon. The officer in command remained motionless.

"They wait for the sunset gun from the castle!" the Spaniard explained. "See, the officer raises his sword! The four men have taken aim. When the lieutenant drops the handkerchief it will be done! Now—no—hark! The cannon shot—but no—another roar from San Miguel! Twenty-one cannon shots! The King is born!"

Suddenly the flag rose to the end of the mast. The national anthem sounded from the fortress. A messenger on horseback furiously spurred his steed from the barracks, sounding the recall upon his cornet as he rode.

The officer with the sword took the bandage from the man's eyes; the soldiers on duty lowered their guns!

"Right about—face!"

And then the crowd went mad. Men shouted and threw their caps into the air, women screamed and fainted.

"What—what does it mean?" The Englishman turned excitedly to his companion. "Are they not going to shoot him?"

"No, Señor. Sebastian Salgueiro will return to his farm upon the outskirts of Lugo and dig potatoes for the rest of his life with Farruca, his sweetheart. All criminals may be pardoned for fifteen days after the birth of a King! It is the law."



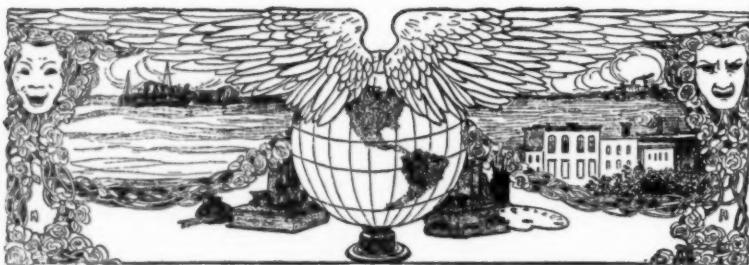
GIVE ME YOUR HEART IN FEBRUARY

BY CHESTER FIRKINS

WHAT do I care for an April lover?
 What is the worth of a Springtime vow?
 Winds of the Winter around me hover;—
 Give me a girl who will love me *now!*
 Give me your heart when the heart is wary,
 When Annabel-Lee-loves chill and die;
 Give me your heart in February,
 If you would have *my* heart's reply.

Any that live are in love in the Springtime;
 All of the World is a-wooing in May;
 Wild-birds coo in the joy of the wing-time;
 Teamsters sing on the city dray.
 But oh, when the ice on the pave is glary
 And the sleet bites cold from the leaden sky,
 Give me *your* heart in February,
 If you would have *my* heart's reply!

What is the faith of a Summer lover?
 Cupid's a jester gay in June.
 A laugh or a sigh or a four-leaf clover
 Is cause for a kiss, forgot too soon.
 Smile if you will on the swains that tarry
 When warm sea-sands in the sunlight lie;—
 Give *me* your heart in February,
 If you would have *my* heart's reply!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

ST. VALENTINE'S

MOST of us, especially if we are old fogies, are apt to think, when St. Valentine's day comes around, that it has gone by—a seeming paradox.

If we take close notice of the toy windows, however, and of the children; in fact, if we come out of our shells and just look about us, we may discover, to our chagrin, that St. Valentine's day has gone by only for us, and that for certain others, quite numerous, it still continues to do business at the same old stand.

But even the custom of keeping St. Valentine's day itself is paradoxical and a sort of gibe at the other days of the year, for it seems to indicate that this is the only day among them all which is dedicated to Love. As if every other day did not contain its proper proportion!

Nevertheless, it is perhaps just as well that one day, in all the year, should be set aside as a poets' day, in which Love can go a-rhyming with all of the special dedicatory privileges thrown in; to say nothing of poetic license.

For if indeed there were no need of a poetic license; if all the poetry were metrically perfect, the similes exact, the strophes consonant with the utmost poetic dignity, how could they consort with true Love, which is, as we all know by experience, so full of error and mischief; which, indeed, derives its chief charm from its very weakness.

As for us, we prefer the old-fashioned filigree lacework valentine,

with its hearts and darts and its slathers of primitive sentiment, rather than the more modern plush affair with its important and too expensive atmosphere.

We will take it also in a box, typical of every lover's condition, for is he not always in a box? As for the rhymes, if *pine* rhyme with *valentine* and *mine*, so much the better. We recall even to-day the first valentine of this description we ever received. As we came upon its hidden mysteries, and read the gilt declaration within, all the cheap tinsel of this world fell away, and a new one of magical inspiration and profound ecstasy opened for us. *She* had sent it; who else? What tender thoughts of her it brought! In no other way could she have expressed herself so well. Its very conventionality, the fact that there were doubtless others like it, only seemed to act as a shield to her modesty, only seemed to protect her maidenly embarrassment.

Henceforth we were translated into a new being. We had a secret in common with all the world. Somewhere in the folds of the lace paper, in among the red images and golden figures, Love in ambush had surprised and conquered us.

THOMAS L. MASSON

INTERPRETING THE AIRSHIP

IT must be a trifle disheartening to the laborers in the vineyard of peace to note with what readiness the public mind has attuned itself to the belief that the world's new-born creature of wings and gasoline is an offspring of Mars. Thanks to Mr. Stead and Mr. Wells, of England, and several lower-keyed Jeremiahs of this land, the near future is visioned with canisters of dynamite dropping from the clouds upon defenseless burgs and battleships, and with rakish aerial craft profaning the heavens with shot and shell and the spectacle of valiant knights tearing at one another's whiskers as they answer the call of gravitation and plunge with inconsiderate wreckage upon roof or shade tree. Already have these dreadful alarms inspired the invention of a cannon for clipping the wings of these soaring nightmares, and sent the British war office huddling under the covers in shiverous fear of a flock of Bleriots. 'T is reminiscent of childhood days, when a knock at the door signified the advent of a robber with a dagger in each hand.

For lack of a higher standard, it is assumed at once that the worth of the airship must be measured in terms of slaughter. What branch of our amiable Government gives official recognition and encouragement to this latest miracle of human achievement? Is it the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce and Labor, any

department of science, any department devoted to the peace and social welfare of the nation? Not if we have read the papers aright. The only official patronage accorded the modern *Daedalus*, the inventor of wings, comes from the theatrical department devoted to the ancient and honorable art introduced into the family by Uncle Cain.

This popular attitude of fear and propitiation—the superstitious attitude of the yokel toward a comet—is indeed a tearful commentary upon our religious mechanism. Guided by the increasing yearly output of Bibles, the widespread observance of Christmas and of Easter, and the present feeling in the air of spiritual prosperity, one might readily be tempted to acclaim the airship as a symbol of moral uplift, and to prophesy that man will make of it a means of grace and political brotherhood. And, moreover, it comes to us in moments of quiet retrospect, that all of the other great inventions of the world, from the printing-press to the dynamo, have each in turn belittled the god of war and given to humanity instead an increase of poise and a closer fellowship of faith and understanding.

Why, therefore, should we not record our humble guess, that this latest invention of man's God-given intelligence is but a harbinger of the world's yet nearer approach to the golden age? To be sure, it is an undramatic guess, void of battle-hymn and scattered brains, and is therefore not to be regarded as a bid for popularity. Excursions to Arcady have never yet proved popular. But none the less it is a harmless recreation and in no way out of consonance with the teachings of the Gospel, to picture grim Bellona fettered to the rusting cannon, and only gentle-faced Concordia floating above the house-tops.

CLIFFORD HOWARD

THE WATER-POWER AND COAL COMBINES

MUCH ado—but not too much—has been made over the question of law and equity between the Agricultural Department and the Department of the Interior, concerning the incalculable water-power and the vast coal deposit of the Northwest. It is really the most important and vital struggle which the United States has known, between the people and a combination of "interests." Ten years ago the amount of electricity generated by water-power was negligible. To-day more than five million horse-power, developed by water, is used in the generation of electricity in America, and one-third of the total water-power now in use is more or less directly controlled by thirteen concerns as nearly amalgamated as is necessary to serve the purposes. The General Electric and Westinghouse Electric

alone hold developed and undeveloped water-power representing over a million horse-power, and further concentration of the developed and undeveloped water-power in the country is rapidly going forward.

Water-power is the cheapest form of power in existence. In large portions of the United States, particularly in the Northwest, it is practically the only form of power available. There are vast water-powers still undeveloped, remaining in public ownership, and the gravest question is how to develop and use them in a way to prevent an eternal monopoly and consequent extortion, beyond the control of the Government if once established. It was this which President Roosevelt sought most strenuously to accomplish, and which Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the Forest Service, is fighting for his official life to protect. Within the national forests the use of sites valuable for the development of water-power is regulated by law, with stringent anti-trust and anti-monopoly clauses, and the necessity of providing water to would-be consumers at reasonable rates, with leases which are limited to fifty years. These are safe, but within the unappropriated public domain there is very little legal restraint protecting the rights of the people at large. At present these power sites cannot be leased, but they are constantly being taken up, fraudulently, under various public-land laws—the homestead law, the timber and stone act, and the mining law. Title to the site on which is located the great dam for the reservoir which supplies the city of Denver was obtained by entering it as a building and stone claim, obtaining it from the Government for a song, whereas its value is many millions. The monopoly of the power sites of California has resulted chiefly from such fraudulent use of the public-land laws. President Roosevelt fought against this encroachment, saying that the power sites belonging to the people and rapidly being absorbed into corporate ownership ought to be developed for the benefit of the community. In a special message to Congress he urged that the theft be stopped till proper legislation provided that these power sites could be leased, under restrictive and limited contracts, instead of being practically given away for all time. To accomplish this, one of his last official acts was to withdraw from settlement and entry portions of the unappropriated public domain containing the more important sites for water-power. A large part of this withdrawal was later restored for settlement claims by Secretary Ballinger, who asserts that he has the strict letter of the law to back him, while Gifford Pinchot is resisting it to the extent of his power, claiming that it is abrogating the efforts of Roosevelt, antagonistic to the vital interests of the people, and wholly in the interests of corporations.

Precisely the same question is involved in the bitter fight over the Cunningham coal combine—claims said to cover a billion dollars' worth

of high-grade coal, taken up, it is stated, by more than a thousand entries, of which it is asserted that many were out-and-out "dummies" and many more fraudulent. When Mr. Garfield was Secretary of the Interior he had the Cunningham claims carefully investigated, and it is reported that he dismissed them as utterly worthless. These fields constitute a considerable part of the available future coal supply of the nation, and it is worthy of serious thought on the part of the whole people, whether they shall be thus surrendered by the Government to enhance the power of monopoly. Now is the time, if ever, for the people to speak in self-defense.

WILLARD FRENCH

THE DECLINE IN POETRY

THE centenary of Tennyson naturally attracted more attention in England than in America. 'T is well. This is the age of limericks, not of poetry. It is poetry to write a few thousand lines "To a Mole Just Behind My Lady's Ear," or "To a Young Man Who is About to Become Assistant Janitor in an Art Gallery," or "To G—," or "To a Hair From the Tail of My Lady's Rat." That's poetry, and Tennyson could write it and did.

If a man tried to write such poetry nowadays, we would promptly incarcerate him. Think of a human being to-day sitting down seriously to read "In Memoriam," much less to write it. As for getting a publisher for it, why, the very idea is preposterous. Or take "Enoch Arden," for instance, which is in somewhat lighter vein. We have no difficulty in conjuring up a mental picture of a contributor using up valuable postage stamps trying to dispose of it to a magazine editor. Even if it got a thorough reading, it would be rejected because of its sad ending.

We repeat, 't is well. Poetry does n't jibe with telephones, automobiles, Empire State expresses, apartment-houses, subways, suburban trolleys, quick-lunch counters, Coney Islands, tabloids, digests, vaudeville, and musical comedy. To enjoy poetry, one must seek a sylvan glade, with no disturbing sound but twittering birds and southing winds, but every sylvan glade is now bedecked with real estate signs. One must have plenty of time also, and the intellect of a child. One must love love for love's sake, art for art's sake, and words for words' sake.

Nowadays people want their ideas served hot off the bat and half baked on one side only. But even that is better than poetry, where the idea is entirely subordinated to its dressing, where the substance does n't matter so long as the form is engaging.

We repeat again, 't is well.

ELLIS O. JONES

WALNUTS AND WINE



SOME ITEMS FROM THE NORTH POLE "GAZETTE"

Colonel and Mrs. S. Key Mo gave a very recherché reception to Commander Peary and his suite on Tuesday last in honor of the discovery of the Pole. Among those not present were Mr. Andrew Carnegie, Mrs. Carrie Nation, Hon. T. Roosevelt, and Dr. Cook.

Dr. Igloo and Mrs. Igloo have postponed their Bridge Party for Friday afternoon, their attractive bungalow on the corner of Union Ice Cake and Latitude Eighty-Seven having floated off to the Coast of Greenland during the recent thaw.

Much excitement was caused at the Explorers' Club on Saturday evening by the receipt of a cablegram from Admiral Golliwogg, of Latitude Eighty-Six, stating that he has discovered the Equator. Unfortunately, the only witnesses of the Admiral's discovery were two white men, but his observations will prove after all the real test of the accuracy of his claims.

Meel Bagg, the youngest son of Major Karpitt Bagg of North Iceville, is reported to have invented a motor-dog that goes by solar power, which in time is expected to take the place of our slow-going four-footed vehicles of transportation, in long journeys over the floes. We congratulate the young man, and feel sure that the Automopup will fill the long felt want in this community.

Upon being opened last night by the Royal Academy of Scientists, the curious looking bomb-shaped article with a slender neck left near the Pole by our recent visitor, Commander Peary, was found to contain a thin yellow liquid, rather agreeable to the taste,

Walnuts and Wine

and having a distinctly perceptible flavor of orange bitters. The hieroglyphics on the side of the object, reading BRONXCOCK-TAILS, have been submitted to the Professor of Romance Languages at the Polar Institute of Higher Learning, to be deciphered if possible. Offhand, the Professor thinks it is an equatorial term for our familiar word JAGVASSER—or JUGVATTER, as some have corrupted it—but as yet he is unwilling to commit himself finally on this point.

The dispute as to whether we belong to Canada or to Brooklyn, recently brought up in the British Parliament, seems to indicate that there are cooler propositions than ourselves in other parts of the world. We do not know, of course, but we have always hitherto had an idea that we belonged to us, and in this case the letters U S mean we, and not Uncle Sam.

Axel Greese, our leading Polar Humorist, says that while Peary did not keep tabs on Cook, and Cook did not keep tabs on Peary, it is quite clear, if they have any ears left at this writing, that both claimants kept tabs on themselves.

The Editor of this paper has been requested to go to the United States to testify in the coming investigation as to who got here first, Doctor Cook or Commander Peary. Not having as yet received a check from either party to the question, we do not know for which side we are expected to testify, but in any case we shall be ready with convincing evidence on behalf of either disputant; but we should know beforehand just what is required of us, having no desire to settle so important a question of precedence impromptu.

John Kendrick Bangs

•

A SOLAR PLEXUS

On one occasion Sam Berger, the brawny manager of James J. Jeffries, was in a small California town, sounding some of the residents as to the possibility of holding a prize-fight. The local police force, a clownish-looking individual with a huge badge, heard of Sam's investigations.

"You can't hold no prize-fight in this here town," said the police force, threateningly, in his best "I-be-the-marshall" tones. "It is agin the law, and I won't stand for it."

"Aw, beat it," said Berger in disgust. "What do you know about law? Why, your very appearance in public in a misdemeanor."

Edwin C. Ranck

Walnuts and Wine

How He COUNTED THEM

"How many children have you?" asked the census-taker of a Hibernian living in the lower part of New York City.

The man addressed removed the pipe from his mouth, scratched his head, thought it over a moment, and then replied:

"Five—four living and one married."

George Barton



THE FEBRUARY TREE

By McLandburgh Wilson

Now blooms for all the world to see
The February cherry-tree,
Whereof, with all veracity,
We now set down the history.

First Cupid saw it standing fair
And cried, "A tree, I do declare!"
Then, whipping out his knife, with care
He left initials carven there.

George Washington then cut it down
In order to acquire renown,
And since in every vale and town
The story serves his fame to crown.

A few years later Lincoln came.
He also wished to make a name.
Pursuing thus the noble aim,
He split it into rails and fame.



A NEW ONE ON GEORGE WASHINGTON

During a Friday afternoon lecture on history in a Baltimore educational institution the instructor had given a lengthy disquisition on the character of George Washington, incidentally touching upon his work as the organizer of the Revolution.

"Now," asked the instructor, "if George Washington were alive to-day, what practical part do you think he would play in present-day politics, judging from the past?"

A prolonged silence on the part of the pupils followed this. Finally, however, one lad saw a way out.

"Sir," he queried, "would n't he be too old?"

Edwin Tarrisse

Walnuts and Wine

THE FABLE OF THE TWO BROTHERS

William and John were two brothers who differed very widely in Temperament (see Dictionary). William was always kind and good, and had been ever since he was born. John was bold and bad, and would be until he died. When William reached Man's Estate (which was the only Estate he ever did reach) he fell in love with a Beautiful Maiden and married her. John also fell in love and married, which was the only time in his life that he followed his brother's example.

As time went on, William rose in the Business World until he became a Bookkeeper for a Wholesale Grocery Firm at a salary of Twelve Dollars a week. John found it necessary to struggle along on a modest stipend of Six Thousand a year, for he was only a Broker. William, however, could n't be any Broker. William proved a model husband, and permitted his Better Half to absorb eleven-twelfths of his earnings, whereas John made his wife keep house on \$4.75 a week, and beat her regularly every Tuesday. After a while, the World was surprised to hear that William's Better Half had run away with a Male Person who wore his hair long and played the French horn with a strong German accent. John's wife still adores him, and Rumor says that she has requested Her Husband to beat her hereafter on Fridays as well as on Tuesdays.

For such is the way of Woman!

Robert T. Hardy



SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY

By W. Stockard

Jack Frost 's done come, he has fo' sho';
De win' jes' rips an' rages,
An' all de time it 's hummin' low,
" Whah is yo' las' summuh's wages? "

Mistuh Win', don't talk to me dat way,
An' put me on de hummuhs.
Say, ah ain't spent no summuh's pay,
'Cause ah did n't wu'k las' summuh.



Marriage is a lottery in which the minister takes no chances.

Charles C. Mullin

Walnuts and Wine

THREE

GRACES

HEALTH, BEAUTY, ECONOMY

To ensure the health of your skin
and the full natural beauty of your
complexion, nothing will serve you
so efficiently and so economically as

PEARS
which is Matchless for the Complexion

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured."

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

TELLING EGGS

The problem of telling eggs is not an easy one, by any means. Very few of us know how to do it properly. On the other hand, there are those who think they should not be told at all; but that is old-fashioned nonsense, inspired entirely by false modesty.

It is safe to say that eggs should be told at as early an age as possible consistent with their temperament. If allowed to go too long, there is grave danger that the egg will become bad, and when an egg becomes bad it is hopeless. The world is full of bad eggs which might have been saved if they had been told in time.

It is just as much a fatal mistake to keep them in suspense by cold storage methods.

Phil Collom



A RARE PRODUCT

By Nixon Waterman

“Do you believe in the supernatural?”

I asked of the genius who
Directs and shapes the play and tells
The actors what to do.
And he answered: “Though I’ve spent my life
In the theatre, I regret
To say I have never, never seen
A ‘super’ natural yet.”



THE NEW BABY

Teacher: “I shall not keep you after school, Johnnie. You may go home now.”

Johnnie: “I don’t want ter go home. There’s a baby just come to our house.”

Teacher: “You ought to be glad, Johnnie. A dear little baby—”

Johnnie (vehemently): “I ain’t glad! Pa’ll blame me—he blames me for everything.”

H. T. Porter



A CONSIDERATE GIRL

Madge: “He said you were very punctual.”

Marjorie: “Why should n’t he? I never kept him waiting more than half an hour in my life.”

J. J. O’Connell

Walnuts and Wine



NABISCO

SUGAR WAFERS

The study of pleasing effects becomes almost an obligation when appetites are to be coaxed into action.

The serving of NABISCO Sugar Wafers with the dessert is an invariable rule with the successful hostess.

NABISCO SUGAR WAFERS may be had

In ten cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

A NEW GAME

Mother: "Children, why are you quarrelling so?"

Willie: "It's a new game. We're playing discovering the Pole."

Ellis O. Jones



TOMMY POINTS A MORAL

Tommy: "Papa, will you please mend my hobby-horse?"

Papa: "Yes, Tommy, when I get time. And I'll mend the dining-room sofa, and the arm-chair, and the clothes-screen, and—"

Tommy: "Gee! Won't you be busy, papa, when you get time?"

Reginald Rochester



THE BACK-YARD CAT; OR, DOES HE MEAN IT?

As far back as we can remember, the back-yard cat has been held up to the scorn of the commonplace critic, and the contumely of the hebetudinous hack writer. Innumerable boot-jacks have been thrown at him. He has been driven from fence to fence without mercy. Hunted and assailed and starved, no reproach has been too bitter to fasten upon him, and no jest too poor.

Why the agonies of a fellow creature—for he is only removed from us by a few vertebræ—should be so exceedingly funny, we have long been puzzled to know. Why his lonely midnight vigils should excite such cruelty, is a puzzle.

We have long held a theory, however, that the souls of those narrow and misguided people who are so ready to assail the back-yard cat are, when they are released from this mortal frame, compelled to inhabit the bodies of cats, and themselves roam from fence to fence, in perpetual torment. It is from these unhappy creatures, and not from the actual back-yard cat, that agonizing cries come in the midnight hour.

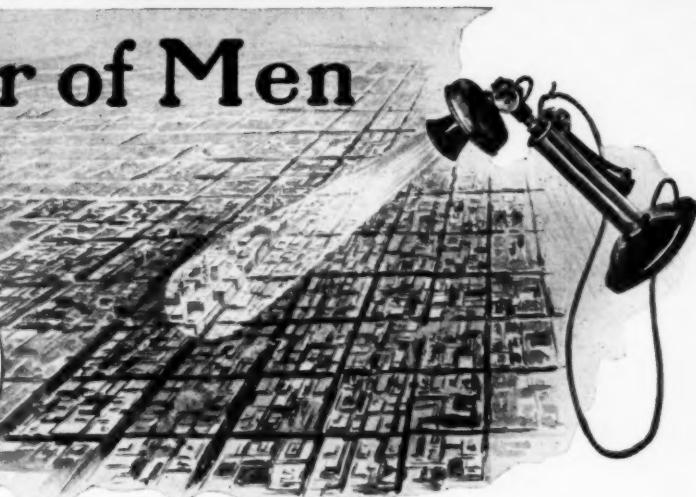
When you hear a cry like that, piercing with fearful shrillness the inky night, please remember that it is the voice of Smith or of Jones, who, when he was alive, passed his hours in throwing things at some unfortunate animal.

The real cats suffer in silence. Only when you come up to them quietly in the daytime as they sit and sun themselves, and show them that you are their friend, will they answer you with an expressive "meow."

Thomas L. Masson

Walnuts and Wine

Finder of Men



An average American knows many people. But he does not always know where they are.

He has a thousand friends and acquaintances. Where are they at this particular moment? He can be sure of some of them—perhaps a dozen. But he wants to locate one or more of the others.

The Bell system enables him to reach them.

If he finds his friend at home, or in his place of business, he talks with him at once. If he learns that his friend is in some other town the Bell System will furnish the connection.

Cities are larger than they used to be. Men know and need to know more people. Yet the need of keeping in touch is as great as ever. Without Bell service there would be hopeless confusion.

The range of the telephone is not confined to one town or one community. It is not satisfying simply to learn that a man is out of town; through the Long Distance Service of the Bell System he may be reached, wherever he is.

The Bell Service extends to all communities. It reaches the millions of American people. One in twenty is a Bell subscriber. The other nineteen can be found because Bell service is universal service.

The telephone does more work for less money than any other servant of mankind. There is economy as well as efficiency in one system, one policy, universal service. Every Bell Telephone is the Center of the System.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY

AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention **LIPPINCOTT'S**.

Walnuts and Wine

MANGLED MYTHOLOGY

The Centaur would be just the thing
A runaway to stop;
To-day, he'd make, and no mistake,
A handy mounted cop.

—*Kansas City Journal*

Old Argus in the baseball field
Would simply be a peach;
Should three men be on bases, he
Could keep an eye on each.

—*Boston Transcript*

Mercury would be up-to-date
And flying records beat;
He'd show us how to aviate
And get there with both feet.

—*A. H.*

Old Midas could be a good chum—
Would we could have such!
No matter how hard up we were,
We should not mind his touch.

—*Houston Post*

Circe—but no, we'll cut her out—
A thought our memory jogs:
Street-cars and such beat any witch
At turning men to hogs.

—*Syracuse Herald*

Of all the list Diogenes
Is needed least again;
'T is plain to see that he would be
A failure now as then.

—*Buffalo News*

Medusa also might be classed
With up-to-date young maids—
She never wore the festive rat,
But snakes she used for braids.

Karl von Kraft

Walnuts and Wine

CRYSTAL Domino SUGAR



2 lb and 5 lb
Sealed Boxes !

BY GROCERS EVERYWHERE !

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE BABY'S MEDICINE

The mistress of the house had been to a concert, and when she returned she was met by the servant with: "Baby was very ill while you were out, mum."

"Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Youngwife. "Is he better?"

"Oh, yes, mum; he's all right now, but he was bad at first. I found his medicine in the cupboard."

"Good gracious! What have you given the child? There's no medicine in the cupboard."

"Oh, yes, there is; it's written on it." And then the girl triumphantly produced a bottle labelled "Kid Reviver."

H. E. Zimmerman



ENOUGH SAID

Not long ago a Toledo clergyman was called upon to conduct the services at the funeral of a man with whom he had had no acquaintance. So, thinking to glean a useful hint or two touching the deceased's character, when he was shown into the living-room the divine called a little boy of eight, evidently a member of the family, and put to him this question:

"Can you tell me what were the last words of your father?"

"He did n't have any," responded the lad, with the utmost naïveté. "Ma was with him to the last."

Elgin Burroughs



ACTOR WOES

By John E. Rosser

If you but knew my miseries,

You'd not so rudely scoff:

My fool friends egged me on the stage;

The audience egged me off.



WHAT HE DESERVED

The newly-elected mayor was about to make his first journey through the town in his official capacity. The people had arranged that from an arch of flowers under which he was to pass a floral crown should hang, surmounted with the words, "He Well Deserves It." But the wind blew away the crown, and when the pompous mayor passed under the arch, only a rope with a noose at the end of it dangled there, with "He Well Deserves It" standing out in bold relief above it.

Hugh Morist

Shave Yourself

No Stropping—No Honing

Every man's shaving troubles were my troubles—before I invented the Gillette Safety Razor.

I was not satisfied with a device that would merely shave the beard without cutting the face—my idea was to shave comfortably without irritation—quickly without lost motion—smoothly without leaving stray hairs or rough patches of beard in the corners and places hard to get at.

All these things are accomplished in the Gillette Safety Razor and in no other razor in the world. Its keen, flexible blade takes a hollow form when fixed in the guard and drawn down by turning the handle. This micrometer adjustment is original with me—no other razor can be adjusted for a fine or coarse beard or for a light or close shave.

My razor will do for you what it does for me and for the three million other users the world over.

It costs \$5 and it lasts a lifetime.

Standard Set, in velvet-lined, full leather case, \$5. Combination Sets, specially adapted for gift purposes, \$6 to \$50.



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Shanghai, China

Factories: Boston, Montreal, London, Berlin, Paris

Walnuts and Wine

THE VOICE OF THE EAST TO THE VOICE OF THE WEST

A most appreciative cuss,
The Sun gets up to look at us,
But when he strikes the West instead
He gets so bored he goes to bed.

McLandburgh Wilson in January Lippincott's

THE VOICE OF THE WEST TO THE VOICE OF THE EAST

'T is true that in the East the Sun
Doth rise, and yet 't is evident
He likes it not, but hastens West
And settles down in sweet content!

C. B. D.

•

DOLLY'S VERSION OF IT

Dolly was not quite six when her mother bought a flock of nine Plymouth Rock hens and a rooster, and diligently explained to Dolly that the rooster was the "papa hen" and the rest were all "mamma hens." After two or three days of confinement, to accustom them to their coop, they were let out to wander about the yard, and Dolly was set to watch them. The hens stayed together nicely, but the rooster showed a tendency to wander into the next-door neighbor's chicken-yard. Dolly chased him back time and again, until she was tired and out of patience. She turned her back for a minute, and when she looked around there were the hens up by the coop, while the rooster was sedately pacing across the garden toward the next yard.

Dolly stamped her foot on the sidewalk and screamed, "Come back here! Come back to your own family." The rooster proceeded with perfect equanimity. Dolly watched him for a moment with a look of utter disgust. Then her mother heard her say very emphatically in an undertone:

"That's just like you men, any way."

R. O. Eastman

•

THE ALTERNATIVE

"Let's go to the theatre."
"I've nothing to wear."
"Then we'll go to the opera."

L. T. H.

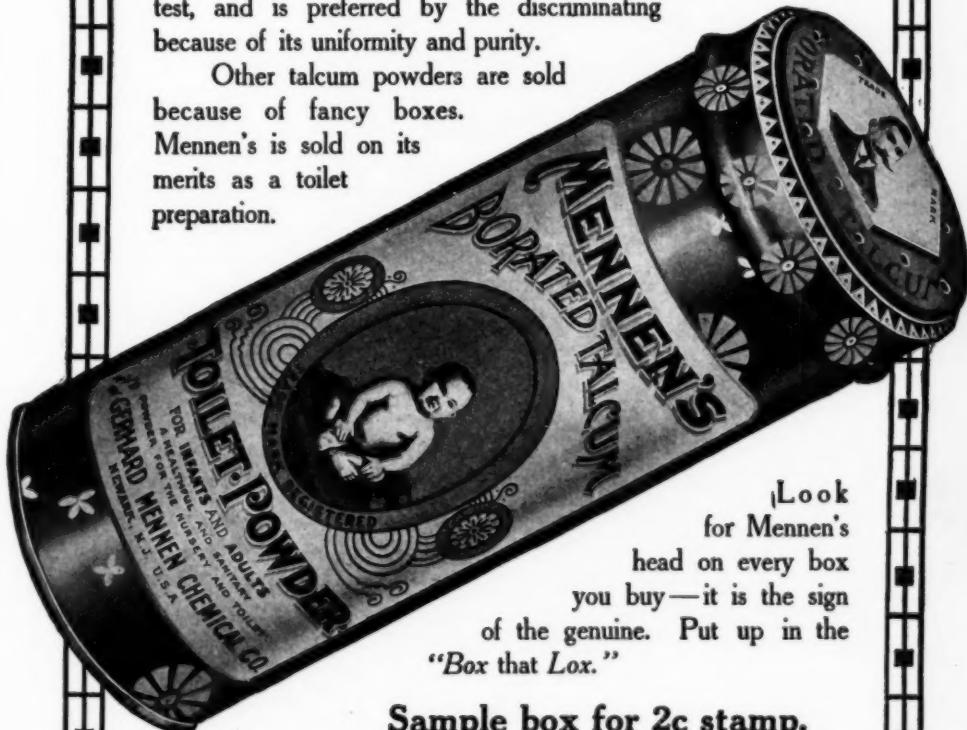
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MENNEN'S

BORATED TALCUM TOILET POWDER

is the original—the first—talcum powder. It is the best by test, and is preferred by the discriminating because of its uniformity and purity.

Other talcum powders are sold because of fancy boxes. Mennen's is sold on its merits as a toilet preparation.



Look
for Mennen's
head on every box
you buy—it is the sign
of the genuine. Put up in the
"Box that Lox."

Sample box for 2c stamp.

Guaranteed by Gerhard Mennen Chemical Co.
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1906. Serial No. 1642.

Gerhard Mennen Co., Newark, N. J.



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Walnuts and Wine

IMPOVERISHED

Newlywed: "What, thirty dollars for a hat! Why, it's simply ridiculous, my dear!"

Mrs. Newlywed: "That's what I thought, Harold; but you said it was all we could afford."

W. Carey Wonderly

A GEM

NOVEMBER 28, 1909.

EDITOR "— —" MAGAZINE,

MY DEAR EDITOR:

I am thinking of sending you a little poem on Spring. This little poetic fancy is a gem; it treats of the throbbing, thrilling thrush of the California Sunlight.

The fantasy is my best work, and is easily worth \$100.00. Perhaps that would be a trifle higher than is convenient for your magazine to pay. Do you think \$25 would be heavy for you?

I have struggled very, very hard to learn to write, and you know poetry is the hardest of all. This little Spring poem has been written twelve different times, and each word fits perfectly with its fellow. It is simple, straightforward, and, I might say, almost wistful, in its beauty.

I do not want to risk it through the mails. So if you can pay me \$25.00—I give you my word, it is my best work—I will gladly submit by registered mail.

I do so love to write to the editors, and I hope you will reply favorably to this letter. I enclose stamp for your reply.

With the best of all best wishes for your magazine and yourself,
I am,

Very earnestly yours,

MARGUERITE.

C. L. Edholm

BOUND TO RECOVER

Patient: "Tell me candidly, Doc, do you think I'll pull through?"

Doctor: "Oh, you're bound to get well—you can't help yourself. The *Medical Record* shows that out of one hundred cases like yours, one per cent. invariably recovers. I've treated ninety-nine cases, and every one of them died. Why, man alive, you can't die if you try! There's no humbug in statistics."

H. E. Zimmerman

Walnuts and Wine



Hartford Fire Insurance Company

With the coming of 1910, THE HARTFORD FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY has rounded out a century of business history. That means something in the hazardous business of fire insurance, for four out of every five companies organized in this country have either failed or retired. It means unshaken stability. The smoke of every great American conflagration has darkened the sky over the Hartford's head. In San Francisco alone it paid ten millions. But emerging triumphant from the ordeals of 100 years, it enters its second century stronger than ever.

Unshaken stability for a century is no mean heritage, but age is venerable only when adorned with honor. Honor implies more than honesty. It is the quality which impels an institution to meet every obligation, not only with promptness and exactness, but with fairness and a spirit of equity. That is the Hartford's record in the past, its aim to-day and its ideal for the future. Its policies afford unsurpassed indemnity, and by co-operating with its patrons to lessen fire dangers, it offers continuous service. Its business, scattered among more than 15,000 communities throughout this great land, is the largest of any fire insurance company in America. Its agents are everywhere.

Insure in the Hartford

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

ESKITOLOGY

A little igloo now and then
Is relished by the Eskimen.

—*Nashville Tennessean*

A little whale oil, well frappéed,
Is relished by the Eskimaïd.

—*Washington Herald*

A little gumdrop, this is truth,
Is relished by the Eskitooth.

—*Detroit Free Press*

A little blubber, raw or b'iled,
Is relished by the Eskichild.

—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

The all of which shows just how hard
The grind is for the Eskibard.

—*Buffalo Evening News*

But poets might detect a gap,
"Tween truth and Peary's Eskimap.

—*Brooklyn Eagle*

And think that Peary, in straits dire,
Rejoiced to find an Eskiliar!

—*Florida Times-Union*

A little pemmican to chaw
Is welcomed by the Eskimaw.

—*Chicago Record-Herald*

We could keep this up all fall,
But fear 't would make the Eskibawl.

—*St. Louis Times*

"T is said two gumdrops and a knife
Will buy a man an Eskiwife.

—*Houston Post*

This sort of rhyming ought to stop—
It 's hard upon the Eskipop.

Karl von Kraft

THE mere "cutting down" of an expense is a crude form of business economy when compared to the broader method of turning that expense into an investment.

The use of a little cheaper paper each year because of the increasing number of letters is but "cutting down." The use of

OLD HAMPSHIRE BOND

turns that expense into an *investment* because of the added influence it gives your messages.

A message on manilla paper will be clear enough but how about the host of things that are read between the lines? Would manilla paper help your correspondent make up his mind to do business with you? A little journey into the workings of your own mind will strengthen our argument.

Let us send you the OLD HAMPSHIRE BOND Book of Specimens. It contains suggestive specimens of letterheads and other business forms, printed, lithographed and engraved on the white and fourteen colors of OLD HAMPSHIRE BOND. Write for it on your present letterhead.

Hampshire Paper Company
The only paper makers in the world making bond paper exclusively
South Hadley Falls, Massachusetts



Walnuts and Wine

NOT A SIN

To Père Monsabre, the distinguished French preacher, there came one Sabbath, after mass, a lady who insisted that she must see him on an affair of great importance. It was a matter of conscience, and she explained that she was most seriously disturbed. In fact, she was sadly given to vanity. That very morning, she confessed, she had looked in the glass and had yielded to the temptation of thinking herself pretty.

Père Monsabre looked at her. "Is that all, my daughter?"

"That is all."

"Then go in peace, for to make a mistake is not a sin."

William C. Bennett

TOASTS

By Robert Warren Gilbert

THE PRESIDENT

Solid, substantial, static, corpulent,
With robust mind to match a husky figger;
Here 's to the twenty-seventh President,
And may his shadow never grow no bigger!

THE DOCTOR

Brisk, bustling, clever, courteous yet curt,
Authoritative, condescending, kind;
He brings a balm for human ache and hurt;
He brings a balm—but leaves a bill behind!

ALL READY FOR PUSS

Mr. Youngbird (on the train): "Did you leave anything for the cat, dearest?"

Mrs. Youngbird: "Oh, how can you ask? You know I would n't forget him. I left a whole can of salmon, with a can-opener right beside it."

H. L. Coggins

HELLO!

The telephone girl had married well, and was stopping at a hotel with her husband. Rising at ten A.M., she rang the bell for the servant.

"Why did n't you wake me up, as I instructed you?" she asked.

"I did, ma'am," answered the slavey, "but when I said, 'Seven-thirty,' you replied, 'Line busy. Will call you up.'"

Isaline Normand

Walnuts and Wine



Keep Your Floors Beautiful

WILL you test—entirely at our expense—Johnson's Kleen Floor, the *only* preparation for keeping floors, stairs, etc., in perfect condition? With Johnson's Kleen Floor, any woman can easily keep her floors bright and clean—like new. All you have to do is to dampen a cloth with the Kleen Floor and rub over the floor—it instantly removes all spots, stains, discolorations, without injury to the finish.

Johnson's Kleen Floor

rejuvenates the finish—bringing back its original beauty. It will greatly improve the appearance of all floors—whether finished with shellac, varnish, wax, or any other preparation.

One of the greatest advantages of Johnson's Kleen Floor is the fact that it is quickly used—two hours' time is sufficient to thoroughly clean and wax the floor and replace the rugs.

We want to send you, Free, a bottle of Johnson's Kleen Floor and a package of Prepared Wax, to be used after the Kleen Floor has been applied

Johnson's Prepared Wax gives the floors a soft, lustrous, artistic polish which does not show scratches and heel-marks, and to which dust and dirt will not adhere.

For keeping mission and polished furniture, pianos and woodwork in perfect condition, all that is necessary is to occasionally apply a coat of Johnson's Prepared Wax with a cloth and bring to a polish with a dry cloth.

Floors receive much harder wear than furniture and woodwork, and consequently require special treatment. Johnson's Kleen Floor should occasionally be used to put them in condition to receive the new finish.

Drop us a line to-day and we will promptly send you samples of both the Kleen Floor and Prepared Wax, Free, also our beautiful illustrated booklet on Home Beautifying. We attach a coupon for your convenience.

S. C. Johnson & Son

Racine, Wisconsin

**"The Wood-Finishing
Authorities"**



S. C. Johnson & Son, Racine, Wisconsin
I accept your FREE offer of samples of Johnson's Kleen Floor and Prepared Wax, also our booklet edition on Home Beautifying. I agree to test the samples on dealer to find them satisfactory, will ask my dealer to supply me.
Name
Address
I.O. No. 1

Walnuts and Wine

WE SENT A CHECK INSTEAD

By Elizabeth Farley

Why do I send this "pome" to you?
Pray do not think me sassy,
But I'm collecting printed slips,
And I've heard that yours are classy.

AN AUTHOR'S MAXIM

The proper study of mankind is a room where womankind can't get in.

L. T. H.

THE ORCHESTRIZATION OF TOMLINSON

It was evening in the Nearswell Apartments, and the janitor was considering turning on the hall lights. From No. 19, on the first floor, came the sound of a young girl practising: "Ah—hah-ih-ah—thuh fluh-how-ers that bluhm—hah-ih-ah!" Across the hall, in 27, young Johnson played "The Soldier's Dream" on his cornet. On the second floor, a Polish pianist was tearing up the chromatic scale, and the Higginses had their phonograph blaring "Washington Post March." On the third floor, Ernest and Harold, the cute twins, played sweetly on mandolin and guitar, and from 96, on the fourth floor, came the chant of the Flint Street Baptist choir in tremendous rehearsal.

In the centre of the building, Mr. Tomlinson looked across at his wife. "Maggie," he said in a strange, low voice, "te-um—te-um—te-ootle-te-o—why is a band that beats?—tra-la—tra-la—hit up the white keys, pound on the black keys—fa, si, do—"

"Horace!" gasped Mrs. Tomlinson, in alarm.

"P flat!" he screamed. "Sound the glad piccolo! Boom, boom!—in A major—hold the note by the tail!"

Then he chased his faithful wife into the dumb-waiter, bit off the gas-fixtures, and tried to crawl through the leak in the kitchen sink. They took him to the Central Hospital for the Musical Insane, and to this day he thinks he's a symphony orchestra.

Stuart B. Stone

BUYING A HORSE

"You say he's a young horse. Then why do his knees bend so?"

"To tell you the truth, sir, the poor animal's been living in a stable too low for him, and he had to stoop!"

Isaline Normand

An Exceptional Issue of 6% Bonds Secured by a Thousand Farms

Here are brief facts about one current issue of Irrigation Bonds. They will illustrate what ideal security lies back of such bonds when the issues are rightly selected.

The Bitter Root Valley Irrigation Co. owns one of the largest irrigated fruit land projects in the world. The Company is composed of well known men who are wealthy, experienced, and capable. The land to be watered consists of about 40,000 acres in the heart of our greatest fruit belt—in the famous apple region of the Pacific Northwest.

A large part of the valley has been under irrigation for many years, so the possibilities of the land have been demonstrated. Fruit land in the valley has lately sold as high as \$1,000 per acre.

The water rights are unassailable, and the total water supply is more than sufficient for all needs. For the irrigable land is distinctly limited by the mountainous bounds of the valley.

\$2,500,000 Invested

The Irrigation Company has invested in the project about \$2,500,000, or about twice the total bond issue. And the bonds are secured by a first mortgage on all the property which the Irrigation Company owns.

The bonds are additionally secured by first liens on the lands and the orchards watered. These liens are given by individual land owners in payment for the land and the water rights. Forty per cent. of the price is paid down, and the balance, secured by the liens, is payable in annual installments.

To secure each \$1,000 bond there are deposited with a Trust Company as trustee \$1,400 of these first liens on farm lands.

The average price at which this land has been sold is about \$200 per acre. The minimum price at present is \$250 per acre. Yet the bond issue is limited to \$30 per acre, or to less than one-sixth the average selling price of the land.

Double Security

Thus the bonds have double security. The first is a mortgage on all the property which the Irrigation Company owns, and the Company's invest-

ment is nearly twice the whole bond issue. The second security is these first liens on farm land—on land which is worth more than six times the amount of the bonds which it secures.

One can hardly conceive of more ample security. Yet these bonds pay six per cent. interest, because the demand for irrigated land is so great that the projects are very profitable.

Part of these bonds mature each year from 1914 to 1919. One may have his choice of maturities.

Ask for the Facts

In the past 15 years we have purchased 75 separate issues of Reclamation Bonds—Drainage and Irrigation. All have been secured by first liens on good farm land, and not a dollar of loss has resulted to any investor.

Irrigation bonds have now become the most popular bonds that we handle. No other large class of bonds offering equal security now pays six per cent.

We have issued a book on Irrigation Bonds, based on all this experience. Every investor, small or large, owes to himself its perusal. Please write for the book today. Cut out this coupon so you won't forget.

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50 Congress St., Boston 111 Broadway, New York
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Please send your free book on Irrigation Bonds
and list of other securities.

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City _____ State _____

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50 Congress St., Boston
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First Nat'l Bank Bldg., San Francisco

Walnuts and Wine

NOT TENDING TO BUSINESS

A country doctor was recently called upon to visit a patient some way from his office. Driving to where the sick man lived, he tied his horse to a tree in front of the house and started to walk across the ground. It happened that work was in progress on a new well, of which the doctor knew nothing until he found himself sinking into the earth. He fell just far enough to be unable to get out of the hole unassisted, and lustily yelled for help.

When he was finally pulled up the hired man remarked to him:

"I say, doc, you had no business down there."

"No, I don't think I had," replied the doctor.

"Don't you know," continued the hired man, "you ought to leave the well alone and take care of the sick!"

Jesse G. Clare

•

A SLOW GOVERNMENT

During the recent war with Spain a woman visited headquarters at Tampa in search of her husband. As she left she was heard to remark: "Well, ef he thinks I'm goin' to be livin' in this suspense, he's mighty mistook! Ef he's killed, he orter write an' say so; an' ef he's livin', he ort to write anyhow. As it is, there is John Jeems a-settin' roun' my house day after day, waitin' fer me ter say the word, an' me not knowin' whether I'm a widder or jest a poor, lonely, forsook wife that needs comfortin'! This here Gover'ment is about as slow as pine sap in springtime."

Joe King

•

AT THE BALL

"He says that everything he makes goes on his wife's back."

"Well, he must be making very little."

Clara O'Neill

•

A PARADOXICAL REPLY

"Doctor, do you think eye-glasses will alter my appearance?" inquired Mrs. Gunson anxiously.

"I shall at least expect them to improve your looks," replied the physician.

Perrine Lambert

•

OSCULATION

Bus: to kiss.

Re-bus: to kiss again.

Omni-bus: to kiss all the girls in the room.

E pluri-bus unum: 1000 kisses in a line.

La Touche Hancock

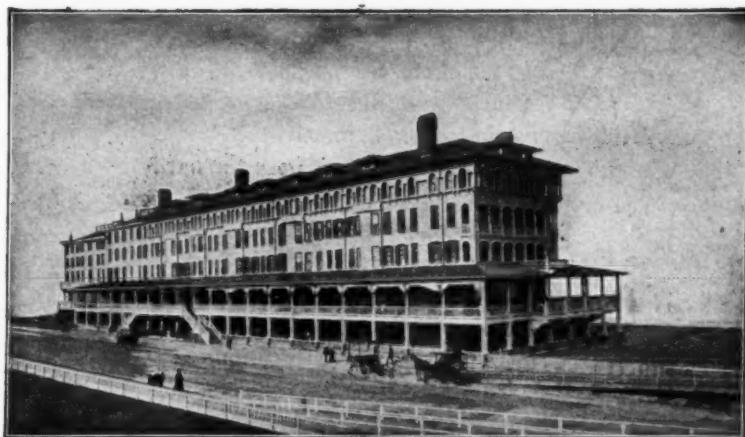
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Leeds & Lippincott

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Walnuts and Wine

THE PLEASURE WAS MUTUAL

The friends of two American celebrities, one a stammerer and the other somewhat deaf, succeeded after much manœuvring in getting them to meet, and the event aroused considerable unholy glee.

Some time thereafter the stammerer was asked how the interview passed off.

"Oh, w-we g-g-got along f-f-finely," he stammered. "I c-c-could n't t-t-talk, and s-s-she c-c-c-could n't h-h-hear me."

Karl von Kraft



A MODERN VERSION

By Edmund Moberly

Simple Simon met a pieman,
Going to the fair.

Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Let me taste your ware."

Said the pieman to Simple Simon:

"Young man, my ancestors were the hardy
spirits who first blazed a trail through
the pathless forest and founded the
pioneer settlement in the region which
is now Missouri. I myself hail from
that glorious commonwealth, and before
I can be induced to part with one of the
succulent gobs of pastry which I am
vending, I must be shown your penny."

Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Indeed, I have n't any."



ADMIRATION REVIVED

"Do you like my new hat?" asked Mrs. Brooke.

"Yes, indeed," replied Mrs. Lynn. "I had one just like it when
they were in style."

Perrine Lambert



A LOVE FEAST

Fat Man: "You're growing stout."

Lean Man: "And you're getting thin."

Whereupon they shook hands, smiled, and each mentally declared the other fellow "a bully good friend."

Gordon Johnstone

Walnuts and Wine

THE Famous



Rayo Lamp

Once a Rayo user
always one



THE
STEADY
WHITE
LIGHT

The RAYO Lamp is a high-grade lamp, sold at a low price.

There are lamps that cost more, but there is no better lamp at any price. It is constructed throughout of the very best materials, and with the best workmanship.

The burner, wick and chimney are the vital things about a lamp. These parts in the RAYO lamp are constructed with the minutest attention to detail. There is nothing known to the art of lamp-making that can add value to the RAYO lamp as a light-giving device.

The construction of the burner is such that it is easy to clean and easy to re-wick, and the chimney-holder may be raised for lighting without removing shade or chimney. It is nickel-plated over brass and, being without embossing, is easily kept clean.

The RAYO lamp is an ornament to any room in any house. Millions of users attest the merits of Rayo lamps.

Every dealer everywhere. If not at yours, write for descriptive circular to the nearest Agency of the

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Walnuts and Wine

MY FIVE-FOOT SHELF

By Blakeney Gray

Were I to fill that five-foot shelf
With books designed to please myself,
I'd give four feet to books of checks
Like those Lord Skibo's treasure decks,
With here and there slipped in the pile
John D.'s Account with Standard Ile;
And for the other foot of books,
Like Moore I'd choose just Woman's Looks!

*•

NIL DESPERANDUM

Percy Parkington rose and brushed the dust from his knees. Then, drawing himself up to his full height, he gazed resentfully upon the form of Miss Muriel Muggins, who nonchalantly fanned herself the while.

"Very well, Miss Muggins," came in bitter tones from Percy. "Oh, very well! You have spurned me, it is true! Indeed, you have spurned me twice! But, though despair eats my heart, I shall not die! I mean to go into the busy world. I will fight! I will win! My name shall become known, and my riches shall become envied——"

"Pardon me for interrupting you, Mr. Parkington," interjected Miss Muggins, "but when you shall have accomplished all that you may try me again."

Edwin Tarrisse

*•

HIS VOICE

It was at a summer hotel, and the baby, being warm and fretful, cried. "Tut! Tut! We can't disturb our neighbors this way," the fond father said, taking the child in his arms. "Let me sing to him, if he won't go to sleep." He sang, and straightway came a knock at the door and these words: "There's a sick lady next door, and, if it's all the same to you, would you mind letting the baby cry instead of singing to it?"

Clara O'Neill

*•

HIS SUSPICIONS AROUSED

Reggie: "I hear you've broken it all off with Edna."

Archie: "I should say so. That pet parrot of hers is all the time saying, 'Kiss me again, Jack.' That is n't my name, you know!"

Reginald Rochester

White Rock

"The World's Best Table Water"

Include an Ocean Voyage in Your Winter Tour

Let us plan a circle tour from and back to your home city, by rail and water, through the New York Gateway via the

Atlantic, Gulf and West Indies Steamship Lines

Florida, the Carolinas, Georgia and San Domingo via CLYDE LINE
Texas, California and Pacific Coast points; Florida—West Coast, Mobile and New Orleans via MALLORY LINE

Porto Rico, cruises to and around the Island via PORTO RICO LINE
Nassau-Cuba, direct service via WARD LINE
Mexico-Yucatan, direct service with rail connections for all important interior cities via WARD LINE

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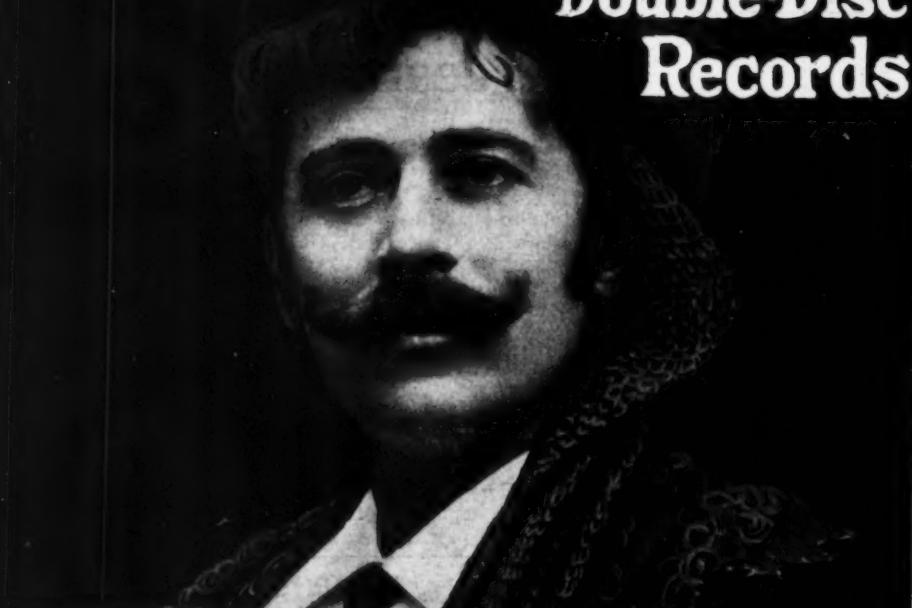
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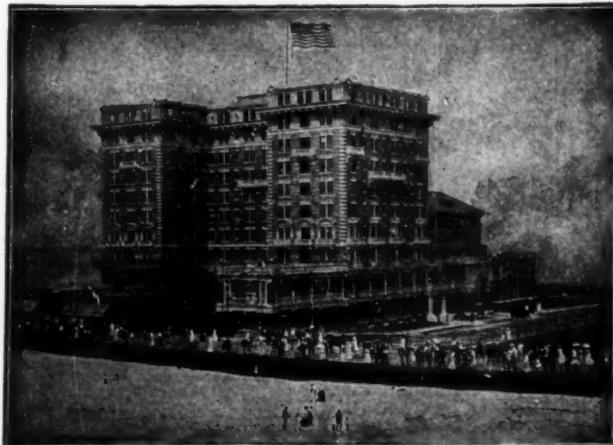
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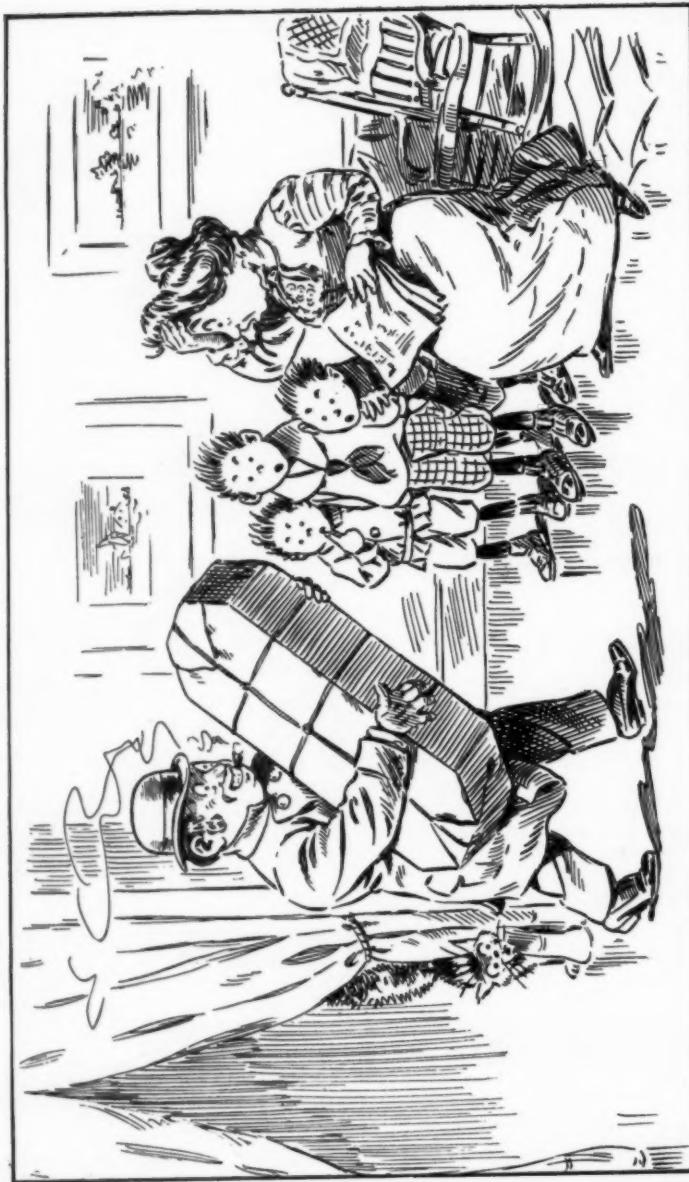
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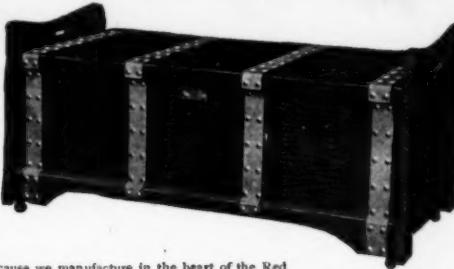
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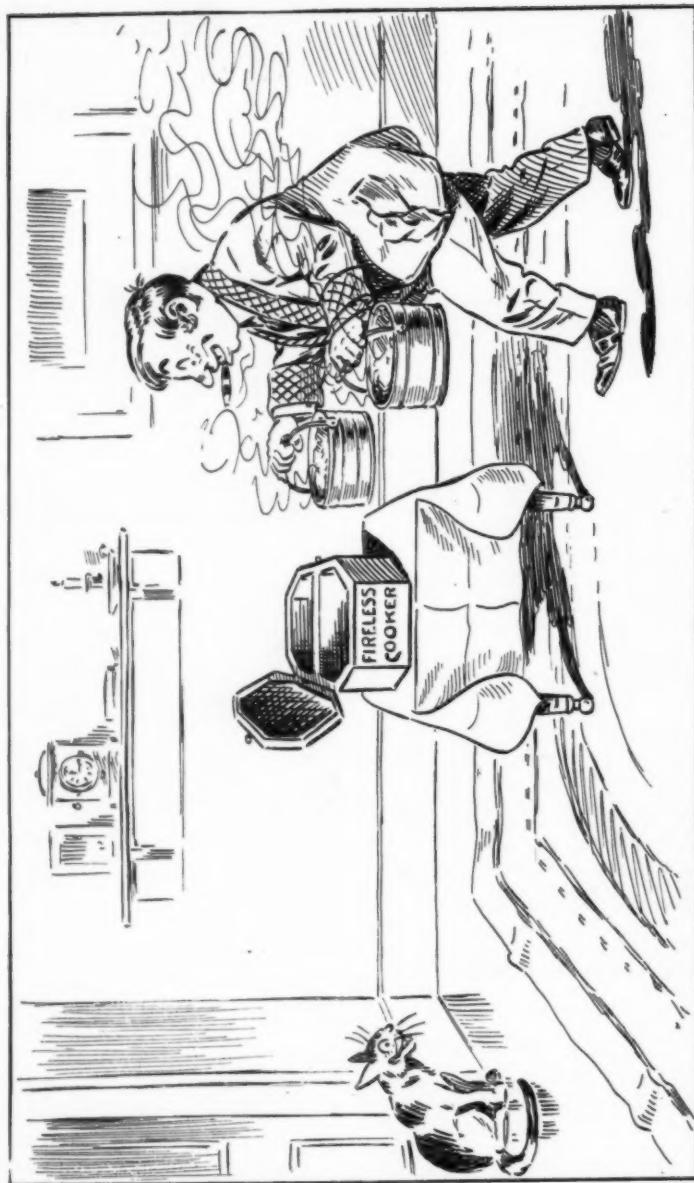
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JOHN:—"Only a peck of hominy, I bought it on the way home, to try the machine, but gosh ! I did not know it would swell up like that ? ! ! D——! ! ?"

THE CAT:—"He always was a swell guy ! It's a wonder he didn't blame it on the cooker."